



This is a digital copy of a book that was preserved for generations on library shelves before it was carefully scanned by Google as part of a project to make the world's books discoverable online.

It has survived long enough for the copyright to expire and the book to enter the public domain. A public domain book is one that was never subject to copyright or whose legal copyright term has expired. Whether a book is in the public domain may vary country to country. Public domain books are our gateways to the past, representing a wealth of history, culture and knowledge that's often difficult to discover.

Marks, notations and other marginalia present in the original volume will appear in this file - a reminder of this book's long journey from the publisher to a library and finally to you.

Usage guidelines

Google is proud to partner with libraries to digitize public domain materials and make them widely accessible. Public domain books belong to the public and we are merely their custodians. Nevertheless, this work is expensive, so in order to keep providing this resource, we have taken steps to prevent abuse by commercial parties, including placing technical restrictions on automated querying.

We also ask that you:

- + *Make non-commercial use of the files* We designed Google Book Search for use by individuals, and we request that you use these files for personal, non-commercial purposes.
- + *Refrain from automated querying* Do not send automated queries of any sort to Google's system: If you are conducting research on machine translation, optical character recognition or other areas where access to a large amount of text is helpful, please contact us. We encourage the use of public domain materials for these purposes and may be able to help.
- + *Maintain attribution* The Google "watermark" you see on each file is essential for informing people about this project and helping them find additional materials through Google Book Search. Please do not remove it.
- + *Keep it legal* Whatever your use, remember that you are responsible for ensuring that what you are doing is legal. Do not assume that just because we believe a book is in the public domain for users in the United States, that the work is also in the public domain for users in other countries. Whether a book is still in copyright varies from country to country, and we can't offer guidance on whether any specific use of any specific book is allowed. Please do not assume that a book's appearance in Google Book Search means it can be used in any manner anywhere in the world. Copyright infringement liability can be quite severe.

About Google Book Search

Google's mission is to organize the world's information and to make it universally accessible and useful. Google Book Search helps readers discover the world's books while helping authors and publishers reach new audiences. You can search through the full text of this book on the web at <http://books.google.com/>

NYPL RESEARCH LIBRARIES



3 3433 07581687 0

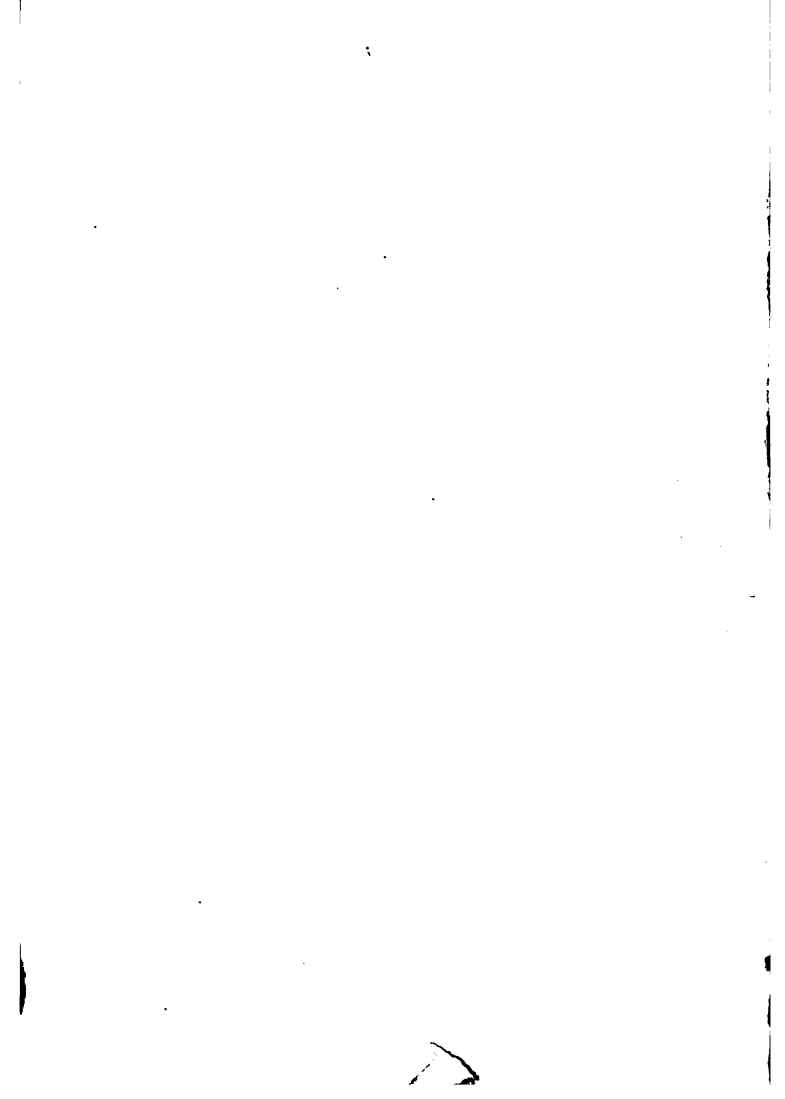
POEMS
OF
ANY YEARS
AND
ANY PLACES

Gibson.



THE REAR ADMIRAL
FRANKLIN HANFORD, U. S. N.
COLLECTION IN THE
NEW YORK PUBLIC LIBRARY
• 1929 •





NEI
Gibson.

not in R
11/21/79
11/21

POEMS

OF

MANY YEARS AND MANY PLACES

BY

WILLIAM GIBSON

COMMANDER U. S. NAVY

AUTHOR OF "A VISION OF FAIRY LAND AND OTHER POEMS"

+

Daß eine lange, weite Stree
Im Leben von einander stand,
Daß kommt nun unter Einer Decke
Dem guten Leser in die Hand.

Doch schäme dich nicht der Gebrechen,
Vollende schnell das kleine Buch;
Die Welt ist voller Widerspruch,
Und sollte sich's nicht widersprechen?

Goethe.

BOSTON

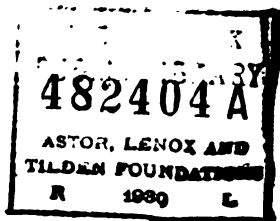
LEE AND SHEPARD PUBLISHERS

NEW YORK CHARLES T. DILLINGHAM

1881

CONTENTS.

	PAGE
.....	1
NA	1
ILDA	2
ST. MARK	3
STATUTO	3
ROME	4
FLORENCE	4
OF SUMMER"	4
.....	4
OF MARS, 1877	4
-A TALE	4
ILL	4
.....	4
ST. BRANDAN	4



COPYRIGHT,
1880,
BY WILLIAM GIBSON.

Electrotyped at the Boston Stereotype Foundry,
No. 4 Pearl Street.

CONTENTS.



	PAGE
PERSEPHONE	9
SIBYLLA CUMANA	15
ALF AND ALFHILDA	22
THE DOVES OF ST. MARK	35
LA FESTA DELLO STATUTO	37
HOLY WEEK IN ROME	40
THE BELLS OF FLORENCE	43
"THE LAST ROSE OF SUMMER"	45
NIAGARA	47
THE APPROACH OF MARS, 1877	51
CASTELLAMARE—A TALE	55
CASTLE CAMPBELL	98
EMPEDOCLES	101
THE VOYAGE OF ST. BRANDAN	108

ANCESTRAL WORSHIP	111
MOUNT VERNON	113
FAITH MILITANT	115
THE "CUMBERLAND"	117
THE ADMIRAL	120
THE DEATH OF WALLENSTEIN	122
A LAY SERMON	124
THE VALLEY OF THE YUMURI	126
BERMUDA	128
IN MEMORIAM	131
"THE SEA IS MELANCHOLY"	133
THE BUCCANEER	134
DESOLATION	138
AROUND THE WORLD	140
ANGELINE.	144
MAY	145
A LOVE POEM	147
BULBUL AND GUL	148
ST. FRANCIS OF ASSISSI	149
ST. FRANCES OF ROME	154

CONTENTS. 7

THE BRIDES OF CHRIST—SONNETS	155
THE ECSTASY OF ST. THERESA—SONNET	161
ART SONNETS	161
TITAN—SONNET	164
TO THE COMET, 1874—SONNET	165
GENOA—SONNET	165
PISA—SONNET	166



POEMS OF MANY YEARS

AND

MANY PLACES.



PERSEPHONE.

IN the boat's shadow leaning, looking down
In azure Cyane, whose fountain-lake
Was blue as the blue flax-flower in the fields,
Blue as the vernal-blue Sicilian sky,
I watched the sacred mullet in the depths —
Smooth, silver-bellied, living turquoises —
Gleam gliding through the dark green water-weeds,
And heard the seeming idle wind, that played
With tassels of the pool's papyrus fringe,
And lifted languid poppies in the wheat,
To earnest listening grow oracular.
Whispers of far-off secrets of the Nile
Stirred in each fibre of those feathering plants;
Hints of high mysteries Eleusinian ran
Shivering through the corn; and a sweet voice,
Sweet and low, breathing from the Fountain Nymph,
Whose blue eye wells with immemorial grief,
Told the old story of Persephone.

Thus sang the Nymph, what time the westering sun
Made golden Etna's pyramid of snow :

Deep-bosomed, slender-ankled in the meadows,
In maiden flower among the flowers of Enna,
Persephone, the fairest of immortals,
Daughter of Zeus and of divine Demeter,
Played with the daughters of Océanus.

With flowers at play, beneath the brow of Enna,
Where the soft meadows slope to the lake's margin :
Rosy Ocyrrhoë, and fair Calypso,
Leucippe, and Urania, and Ianthé,
And lovely Melobosis, and the rest.

She a sweet blossom, blooming her companions,
They wove the dance in mesh of spring-flower gar-
lands ;
Wove hyacinth, lily, crocus, orchis, iris ;
Fair-ankled in the violets, these they gathered,
And the young roses budding bosom-high.

But lo ! from one miraculous root Narcissus
Springs high — a hundred heads ! A joy ! A marvel !
The whole wide heaven was blown abroad in fra-
grance,
The whole earth laughed, and the wide waves of
ocean,
And chaste Persephone stretched out her hands.

The Nymph sang on, the while the setting sun
Threw Etna's shadow far athwart the sea :

It was the snare of Zeus ! O fatal Plant !
Each flower flared up a torch ; the dark earth yawned ;
And from the gulf leaped the grim Lord of Hell —

Leaped Aidoneus, borne by immortal steeds,
Coal-black in hide and hoofs, hot coals their eyes,
Their nostrils snorting fiery-golden steam.

Flecked with the froth of hell, they champed the bit,
Pawing a whirlwind, as the grisly King
Stooped from his car, and snatched the astonished maid.

He bore her all-unwilling in his arms
Away from her white nymphs. They swept the plain:
The olives shook; the mountain-sides turned pale.

I heard the thunder of devouring speed;
The mountains echoing her immortal cry,
Calling on her great Mother and the gods.

I saw the flame-enkindling chariot-spokes
Whirl round by Hybla, the swift, smoking steeds
Tossing a tempest from imperious manes.

One piteous arm Persephone stretched forth;
All else of rose-white limb and rhythmic grace
Seemed gathered up in a black thunder-cloud.

Helios, the bright son of Hyperion, saw
Unmoved; my sister Arethusa heard,
And hastened to Demeter: I alone,

Catching the faint gleam of a golden head
'Neath brows tremendous crowned with awful stars,
Sprang forward to oppose him unappalled;

But Aidoneus, with sceptred arm-sweep, smote
The earth to the core, and vanished. She was gone
From land, sea, starry heaven, and tribes of gods!

And I, unknowing that she might return,
Wept, utterly dissolved myself in tears,
And now am but a streamlet and a voice.

The Nymph ceased; as the solemn twilight fell
A graver voice took up the utterance:

Thou'st heard, O mortal, or in waking dream
Hast fancied thou hast heard, this Water-Nymph
Relate her lamentable tale. No more
The Syracusans here slay the black bull,
Reddening this fountain, but the stream flows pure
From sacrificial blood for evermore.
I am the Mighty Mother. I am she
Whom the Greeks named Demeter; who, they said,
Lighting a torch at Etna's lurid fires,
Sought her deep-bosomed daughter through the world,
Who, wandering, to Eleusis came, and there,
Below the city and the lofty wall,
Above Callichorus, on a jutting hill,
Ordained a temple and rites of import vast,
And taught Triptolemus to sow the corn.
There, having wearied cloudy Zeus with prayers
Importunate, her daughter was brought back
By winged Hermes; she to her on wings,
Delirious from despair and the rebound,
Leaped like a Mænad down the mountain-side:
But joy soon drooped: divine Persephone
Had eaten the deadly-sweet pomegranate seed,
And therefore must abide in Stygian gloom
For one-third part of the revolving year.
Then both, much grieving in their mighty minds,

Wept, but were comforted by Zeus the all-wise.
These are but old-world fables — they are dead.
Nevertheless I live. Lean low, and list
A murmurous motion in the growing grain,
An audible flow in the ascending sap
That thrills the tender shoot as with delight;
The beating of minutest arteries,
In time and tune with the great sun and moon;
Yea, at all points of all this visible frame
Put thou a finger on my pulse. I live!
For I am Nature. And my child is Beauty,
The thing divinest in divinity
Save Love — and Love is but the holiest Beauty.
The mystery of my being and of hers,
Yea, of thine own, was never yet revealed
To old philosophy or science new;
But follow thou the motion of my lips,
And murmur deeper meanings than thou know'st,
In invocation to Persephone.

I.

Come when the snow-drop peeps in northern mead-
ows,

Come, goddess, with the early almond blossom,
Its sea-shell pink and perfume on thy cheek;

Come when the bloom-shaft shoots up in the aloe,
Come tressed in dripping fragrance like the acacia,
The violet in thine eyes and on thy breath!

In finer grace slight not thy solemn emblems:
Come, then, with all serene and stately lilies,
And with the milky roses in the bud;

Yet, coming, feed thine emerald torch of cypress,
And flush with flower of flame-red the pomegranate,
Nor shun the dim grot moist with maiden-hair!

Come with the loosened floods from snows of Etna,
Come with the wild bees to the thyme of Hybla,
Come with the birds of passage from the south;

Rise on dark freshness of the sea at dawning,
Voluptuous, strangely toned from Night that hid thee
In majesty of Darkness crowned with flame!

From silent dew and thunder-shower we call thee,
Persephone, by name that at Eleusis
Was held too sacred for unhallowed lips!

O Many-named! O Joy that thrills with Wonder!
O Love! art thou indeed enthroned in Hades?
Death! art thou daughter of the Heavenly King?

II.

A Mater Dolorosa moveth Heaven!
Lo! Light and Love from Winter's arms are risen,
And all the ambrosial mystery of Spring!

A season only: the supernal Powers
Inveterately withhold the full fruition,
Vex with conditions all their gifts to man.

We know in part. The seed must rot to quicken;
And one comes up an Oak, and one a Lily,
The whole Idea perfect in the germ;

But what we are, and why we are, and wherefore
We are the thing we are, behold, we know not,
And grope in Nature for the secret hope.

Blow wide, O new year! Last year's flowers have
perished;
And yet the type lives on, and re-appeareth
With not a ray lost from its crown of light.

And last year's nests are empty; but the woodlands
Ring as of old; the nightingales full-throated
Are singing the melodious songs we know.

There's a divinity, which we call Beauty,
Touches us darkling: when the wild weed blossoms,
When in the worm is winged the butterfly:

But hail, Persephone! hail, Spirit of Spring-time!
Aid us to recognize thy breathing symbols
And almost proof of Immortality!

SIBYLLA CUMANA.

MOOON-CURVES of shore, and promontories and
isles.

A many-purpled sea flowing in and round.
Wrecks of antiquity and yet elder myth.
A rubbish, half on land and half in sea,
Of Rome's once sumptuous sea-side luxury.
Phlegræan fields, where Titan force still heaves
The uncertain bases of the vernal hills.
Volcanic bowls, smouldering and boiling yet,
Or brimmed with cool oblivion of the wave.
A ghastly tunnel in the sunny cliff
Of one fair lake that bears Avernus' name.
A narrow chamber of Cimmerian gloom
And Phlegethonic steam — the Sibyl's grot.

A green hill, crowned with venerable walls
Of an Acropolis, and a lonely shaft
Of fluted Doric, where Apollo's fane —
The Sibyl's lover erst and tutelary god —
Was reared by Dædalus, hither voyaging
With wings, as fabled, or invented sails.
And the hill honey-combed with labyrinths
Of caverns, opening on the sunset sea —
The hundred mouths of Sibylline oracles.
The Acherusian lake. The Elysian fields,
Clothed in the delicate atmosphere of spring,
Sprouting with young vines, redolent of the fruit
And flower of orange, true Hesperian gold,
And the wide whisper of the violet.
A round and vaulted ruin, temple or bath
In times imperial, where two women danced
The tarantella to a tambourine,
That echo made orchestral: one a girl,
Like a Bacchante in abandonment
To her own grace, with pure Hellenic face,
And plash of blue-black hair, and flashing eyes;
And one a weird sexagenarian crone —
Types of the Sibyl in her youth and age.
These reminiscences of a long day
By Baiæ's and more ancient Cumæ's shore
Set me to dreaming of the mystic maid
That sold the books to Tarquin. Me she led
To no ancestral and prophetic shades,
But through the gates of Sleep, ivory or horn,
She brought me, with the scent of roses dead,
One Sibylline leaf — a poem of her youth,
Set to love-music by the Lyric god.

And as I read, or, rather, as the words
Made subtle melody to my inner ear,
I saw a maid of pure Hellenic face,
And liberal hair the hue of starlight waves,
Like my young contadina, but more fair —
And how unlike the sweet and solemn eyes!
The Graces, the wise Hours, and Harmony
Modulated her mien; the perfect pose
Of drooped head, flower-like on the swan-soft throat
And shoulders; every undulating line
Of beauty flowing from her virgin zone
Clasped 'neath the ripening apples; the pure limb
Bared by the looped-up robe; and sleeveless arms,
A moulded music lessening to the hand,
A lucid arch in sunlight, that threw half
Her face in rosy shadow, while the other
Hollowed a dainty cup of warm wet sand,
Glistening like diamonds. For the fervent West
Ran in white splendor over Cumæ's beach.

This solitary Figure — and a Voice,
Like the Greek chorus, in my dreaming ear,

Phœbus Apollo, beautiful Apollo,
His golden locks laved in Castalia's fountain,
With glitter of feet and of his shapely tunic,
To me, that eve, out of a shining haze,

Moved, and spake wingéd words: "O youthful Sibyl!
The wise soul and the tender charm, in shadow
Of thy sweet brows, constrain me to thy service.
Speak! is there any boon a god may give?"

I answered: "Life is brief, and death is dreadful.
My thoughts, far-darting as thy shafts, O Phœbus!
Pierce the veiled Ages — I fall at the threshold.
I would my years were many as are these sands!"

Then he: "The grudging Fates exact conditions.
Pause: they demand therefor a virgin Priestess.
Years I can give, not fadeless youth: youth withers
With the renunciation of young love.

"Lo! I that, in the deep folds of Parnassus,
Am Lord of Song and Divination, warn thee.
Erato's mirth, and not the Pythia's fury,
Should mould the lyric of thy life. Expand,

"O Rose-bud, to the sun-warmth! Flower to flower,
Goddess-like, lean to me in frank surrender
Of balmy breath and bosom; for my passion
In a rich sunset's rose descends on thee.

"Choosing the ephemeral rapture of the roses,
Fertile of other roses, other raptures,
Fulfil thy womanhood. Trust me. Like the Pleiads,
Wed with a god, and night may win a star!"

Thus said or sang — for all his words were music —
Striking a golden lyre with golden plectrum,
The Lord of Light. And chanted, Io Pæan!
The dear heart and the mind within my breast.

He drew me to him, one immortal moment
Folded in unconsuming might of fire,
Like a live brand, thrilled by the breath ambrosial
And the relentless tyranny of his kiss.

Ai! Ai! the sweetness of it! No accession
Of maiden shyness moved me; but strange horror
Suddenly shivered through the soft desire,
And wrenched me shuddering from the god's embrace.

And he made moan: "Unblest in love and friend
ship,

My monuments are Hyacinth in flower,
Leucothœ's frankincense, and Daphne's laurel.
O Sibyl! cruel to thyself and me,

"The Parcæ do but fright thee, being jealous:
Thy choice is free." Ai! Ai! the sadness of it!
For something hardened in my breast. I answered,
Coldly: "Forgive me, Phœbus, and farewell!"

"If pure and pale as lily-of-the-valley,
Chaste as the rose-bud with its folded petal,
And cold as rose or lily carved in marble,
Must be thine oracle — I am content."

Deep voices in the hills muttered approval;
The wide skirts of a goddess rustled near me;
Wings of a mighty eagle, swooping o'er me,
Darkened the world: it was the bird of Jove!

An angry Sun-god, nevermore my wooer,
Left the lone beach to shadows and to voices;
With shadows and with voices lonely ever,
The long, slow years have made me what thou see'st.

Then — with that deep-dissolving power of dreams
To make the mutable seem natural
As are the unfluctuating forms of life,

To fuse yet not confuse identity —
The Sibyl was an ancient woman, like
In little to the maiden of the shore.
A turban crowned the centuries on her brow
Wave-marked, as are the rocks; her features, worn
With vigil, fast, and hunger of the heart,
Had lost the memory of mobile grace;
And all the peach-bloom was a parchment scroll,
Wrinkled and written o'er with awful things.
But yet her eyes were lustrous as in youth,
Far-looking, listening, lofty, as if she heard
Voices from a sublimer sphere, and saw
Into the infinite Silence yet beyond,
Wherefrom we came, and whereunto we go.

One Figure, altered, yet the same — a Voice
Of mournful cadence in my dreaming ear.

Oh, wisely for the welfare of mankind
Is Isis veiled! We, from the world apart,
Gain but a glimpse — and never smile again!

Gain, at this price, half-knowledge worse than none;
As moonlight is more dangerous than the dark,
Because deceptive, to the mariner.

One with Earth's life-voyage and vicissitudes —
Its wake the setting suns, its mast-head peaks
Rolled heavily against the rosy dawns —

Isis is all that hath been, that shall be —
Lo! while I speak, thy Present is her Past!
The immediate active Future is thine own,

If but the space 'twixt flash and thunderbolt.
Look not beyond. The irrevocable Hour
Shape into ever-ready moulds of Love;

And aim to round thy duties with thy days
To perfect form; not willing to defer
Work at thy hand to hands behind the veil.

Be happy and make happy: morn tells morn
Apollo's golden rule for gods and men.
Yet is the best of bliss sweet scorn of self.

I, crowned by Sorrow, bid Aurora sing
With all her larks! Olympus doth send down
Its Iris on the thunders to the fields.

O fond Youth, cull the blossom in the prime!
No god forbids; and the gods envy thee
Thy cherished flower and its divine response.

O Maiden, with the May-bloom on thy cheek
And in thy heart, be generous while 'tis May!
Give while the gift makes sweeter all the world.

O Mortal, knowing nothing, Death is wise
With all of knowledge — Love! and leave the rest
To Hades and the Father of the Gods!

ALF AND ALFHILDA.

THE Northern Lights and Morning meet
Above the North Sea wave,
Thronged by the Scandinavian fleet,
Each bark with banners brave.
Straight-furrowed by those ocean-ploughs,
White are a hundred wakes,
And foam-clouds from a hundred prows
Fall off in shining flakes.
A hundred pennants point to land,
Each sheet is flowing free,
Each tall mast bending toward the strand,
Which stretches on their lee.

From haughty Sigurd's towers of pride
The lords of ocean come,
To bear a Viking and his bride
In honor to their home —
A bride from no soft wooing borne,
Won by the bow and brand,
Yet given, no whit in grudge or scorn,
From her proud father's hand —
And now in sheltered creek and bay
Their barks are hauled ashore,
And up the castled crag straightway
Like a flood-tide they pour.

For "Wassail, Northmen! wassail high!"
Young Alf, the bridegroom, calls;
And soon the surge of revelry
Is swelling in his halls.

“Smite every broad shield till it ring
A clear din, iron-sharp!
Let Skalds with stirring voices sing,
And strike the sounding harp!
I bring a champion-bride from far;
For no pale, puling slave
Is meet to be the queen of war,
And mistress of the wave.”

Fair as a star in stormy skies,
She sways that rugged crew,
Abashing those bold-staring eyes
With hers of softest blue.
The tall, straight Ash the chieftain is,
And she the graceful Elm,
And yet no lordlier soul is his
Than hers, to rule a realm.
That small hand, clasped in his, can strike
From dinted falchions flame,
That cheek unchanged, now maiden-like
With blush of modest shame.

The deep-frothed ale the warriors quaff,
As clouds drink from the sea,
And laugh, as those swoln clouds may laugh,
In mood of thunder-glee.
To clash and clang, and harp-string's twang,
Their nerves, steel-tempered, thrill,
Till Alf the storm, with wide right arm,
Sweeps down — and all is still:
“A love-song, minstrels of the North,
For fair Alfhlida's sake!”

Gray Skalds their grim brows smooth, and forth
A softer music shake.

THE RETREAT OF ALFHILDA.

I.

Far o'er the foaming seas,
In the north-west,
Where on the Hebrides
Birds of storm rest,
There, in a sparry cave,
Hollowed by shocks
Of the loud-roaring wave
Out of the rocks, —

Dwelt the fair daughter
Of Sigurd the proud.
Sea-kings had sought her,
But freedom she vowed,
And, with her only
Of maidens a score,
Thus far fled lonely,
To dwell evermore, —

Save — so the bargain ran —
Hither should rove,
Strong with the strength of man,
Strong in his love,
He whom the dragon's breath,
Blasting the way,
Deadliest form of death,
Could not dismay.

II.

Then, were he conqueror
In the fierce strife,
Him would her soul adore,
Vassal and wife!
Happy the vanquished maid,
Clasped in those arms,
Worthy her battle-blade,
Worthy her charms!

III.

Thus, her heart laden
With dreams and desire,
Seemeth the maiden
Proud child of proud sire?
No; to the tender dream
Yields she in tears,
Tears that like Freya's seem,
In the gold-spheres.

The harpers ceased: the hue was high
Upon Alfhilda's cheek;
The Vikings drained their long horns dry,
And Alf stood up to speak.
"Drink, warriors, yet from wassail-bowl!"
He shouted in his pride:
"Skool! to a sea-king's daughter! skool!
Skool! to a sea-king's bride!
Well done for gray-beards, Skalds! Your throats
Tune for another stave!"
The great harps ring rough rumbling notes
To Runic numbers grave.

THE WEIRD WATERFALL.

I.

In mountains of Norway,
Lo! the torrent's dusk doorway!
In the great-gulféd mountains,
From Thor's vasty fountains,
Headlong that torrent
 Is hurled.
A gleaming torrent!
Whose gorge of gloom, horrent
With crags, huge and ragged,
Pine and fir shaggéd,
Through dragon-jaws yawns on the world.

II.

Far squalls from that storm-house,
With lank wings enormous,
Are known on the Atlantic.
In the near woods gigantic,
Aye tossing like frantic,
 The boughs creak;
Flaps the foul vulture yelping,
There the wolf-hag howls whelping,
Yet nearer, down-pouring,
Is the cataract's roaring,
And the vapors hang mute round the peak.

III.

The chasm is walled round
With gray shafts basaltic.
Ye may fathom the Baltic,
But that hollow never,
Nor plombs the sheer river
 Its deeps.

Ere midway down-hasted,
Into sounding smoke wasted,
Slow-boiling, up-coiling,
As from a witch-cauldron
The snaky charm lazily creeps.

IV.

From the keystone ledge, crowning
A cavern's arch frowning,
The waters fall, breaking
In foam like snow flaking,
The gloom making whiteness
A wonder.
In blaze of broad daylight,
But in the cold gray light
Of morn and eve mostly,
The steep fall stands ghostly,
Half swathed in cloud, trampling the thunder.

V.

What form of brave feature,
And sinewy limb shapely
Unsheathed of armor;
What proud form of far more
Than common men's stature,
On a shelf
Stands naked, save only
His loins girt, and lonely?
'Tis the bold thunder-god in
Full manhood flushed, haply,
Or the welkin-king Odin himself?

VI.

No; mistily looming,
That form is but human.

'Tis Alf, of the Vikings,
For soft maiden-likings
The youngest, the strongest
In fight.
Why seeks he no warmer haunt
Than the cold cormorant?
'Tis Love warms, hath made him
To dare — Freya aid him! —
With the torrent the plunge into Night.

“Halt there!” cried Alf, “upon the vergo
Of that terrific spring!
The caverns of that maelstrom surge
No mortal voice may sing;
Let never Skald in numbers strive
To shape the darkling Ill,
Which he must face who dares to dive
To the roots of Ygdrasil.
I dared that livid Under-World,
Confronting, to defy,
And serpent-crested Horror curled
Lives lurid on mine eye.

“Oh! beautiful and terrible,
I saw the Nornas three;
They chanted runes, they wove the spell
Around the mystic Tree;
They gave to me a flame-tipped dart
Of poison, hot and dire
And deadlier than the dragon's heart,
To conquer fire with fire.

I spake no word — my need was known.
But, Harp and Minstrel, swell
Sweet Freya's praise! Through her alone
I 'scaped the coils of Hel."

HYMN TO FREYA.

I.

Her thick hair is golden;
Her white robe is floating on air;
And, though un beholden,
We know that her body is fair,
For a rosy effulgence
Reveals the warm limbs as they move
In rapturous indulgence
Of grace — the sweet Goddess of Love.

Like dew-drops ethereal,
Jewels her white neck adorn;
But alone her imperial
Eyes make the dawning of morn.
Oh! sweeter than singing
She whispers — the birds burst to song,
And golden bells ringing,
The charm of her presence prolong.

The groves where she passes
Hang heavy with blossoms and fruit;
In rich meadow-grasses
Spring flowers at the touch of her foot.
She loves best the roses —
A rose-branch for sceptre she takes;
And where'er she reposes
Droop willows o'er crystalline lakes.

II.

By night, in fir forest,
O Wanderer, astray and afar!
When thy need is the sorest,
Lo! a light, not of moon nor of star!
Have courage, O Seamen!
She glides o'er the tempest — behold!
Her snowy swan-women
Swim high in the azure and gold!

Young Maidens, with winning
Blue eyes, like the flowers of the flax
Which deftly ye are spinning,
Let not the fair fingers relax;
Each spun thread she doubles
With one that is golden and fine,
A dream-thread that troubles,
Yet maketh your task-work divine.

III.

Her home is in ether,
Where Summer unfading abides;
Its warmth from wild weather
A limpid stream ever divides.
Of the Unborn the warden:
Their souls are as butterflies' breath
To the sweets of that garden,
Till summoned to life and to death.

There time and tide loiter;
There sparkles the Fountain of Youth.
Could we drink of that water,
Sunny gold were the gray hairs of ruth.

But freely 'tis sprinkled;
It freshens the world with the dew;
The morn-red unwrinkled
To Skald and to skylark is new.

IV.

Coy Queen of Heaven,
A bride, before Odin, she flies;
As cloud by wind driven,
Chased and embraced in blue skies.
The Lady of Sorrow,
Lorn mother of Balder, o'er meres
And mounts, a sad morrow,
She hangs in a heart-break of tears.

She leaves the March meadow
For Ygdrasil's roots, deep in night.
Queen Hiel is but shadow
Of darkness, and slinks from her sight.
On Hiel's throne, the forces
Of nature, the rife under-earth,
She stirs at their sources —
And Death is but travail of Birth.

V.

The sun, like the leven,
Shall die, and the darkened earth sink;
The stars rain, till heaven
Is empty; the sea itself shrink.
For, with flames for corolla,
The All-life Tree shall flower and consume;
Asgard and Wallhalla
Crash down in the thunders of doom.

But she is eternal:
A new earth she seeth arise,
In loveliness vernal,
From ocean, and blessedder skies.
And battle and murder
At Balder's returning shall cease —
Balder and Höder,
The gods of a heaven of peace.

VI.

She is all that is fairest
In the world and the welkin on high,
The grace that is rarest,
The glow that is homely and nigh.
She is Freedom and Duty,
Frank Morn and the Veiling of Light,
The Passion of Beauty,
The Fragrance and Voices of Night.

Divinest, supremest,
Crowned Queen of the Quick and the Dead,
She is more than thou dreamest,
O soul of desire and of dread!
She is Spring-time and Gladness,
And Rapture all glory above;
She is Longing and Sadness;
She is Birth — she is Death — she is Love!

To song so weird those warriors rude
And wild were little wont;
Strange awe the wassail-rout subdued,
And tamed each tawny front;

Till Alf: "Once more! Ye who have sung
So well the Queen of Love,
Let now a battle-chord be strung,
Even Freya may approve!
Alfhilda sing, her prowess stout
On the Field of Golden Curls!
Then, with loud shout, a parting bout—
Skoal! to our Norland girls!"

THE FIELD OF THE GOLDEN CURLS.

I.

The Viking's at sea, has set sail with the sun,
Young Alf with his warriors—twenty and one;
He is bound for Alfhilda's far fortress of pride,
And by Freya he swears he will make her his bride.

The wind-god is whistling as blithe as a boy,
On the glad-rolling billows are foam-bursts of joy;
And, day after day, as he speeds to the west,
Lo! all the cloud-goddesses smile on his quest!

How glitters in sunlight the swift salmon-shoal!
How the porpoises tumble, the sea-lions roll!
And great gulls of Thule, gaunt birds from the Pole,
How grandly they sail, and lead on to his goal!

II.

O'er the Vikingir ship laughs the morn in a sky
Thick with Vikingir birds, as the lone isle draws nigh,
Where the Princess, with score of fair maidens, hath
barred

Her cave from mankind, with a Dragon for guard.

Oh! Alf leaps to shore with the first stranding shock
Of his keel, and the monster crawls out of a rock,
All scaly and horrible, fierce flame and stench,
So foul that the bravest might sicken and blench.

Yet what need he fear, he whom Freya hath charmed
With the mystical Rose, and the Nornas have armed?
'Tis Fate itself draws the hot shaft to the head,
And in path of the Viking the Dragon lies dead.

III.

But whence are those warriors? Here in the west,
Their banner unknown, with a dove for a crest?
"Ho! ho!" shouted Alf; "we have foemen unguessed,
Man to man they are there — let our swords do the
rest!"

They close in the combat, and steel rings on steel:
A moment — and all, save the rival chief, kneel!
What means it? He only, with dexterous sleight,
Opposes Alf's arm, nor surrenders the fight.

The sparks fly from hauberk and shield — but each blow
Of Alf is but glancing, so nimble his foe.
"Like a girl!" muttered he — ah! with falchion's full
heft,
The helm of Alfhilda's defender is cleft!

Why springs forward the Viking? Why shakes with
alarms
His soul, as he catches his foe in his arms?
Unscathed, thank All-Father! though stunned — and,
behold!
The split helmet streameth with ringlets of gold!

And all over the field, whilom where they kneeled,
They lift the stern head-gear, they drop sword and
shield,
And lo! they are laughing-faced girls, every one,
With flaxen or auburn curls, gold in the sun!

So Alf won Alfhilda! O maidens! I wist
Ye have many shy ways to refuse and resist:
But who hath so fought for her maiden degree,
And who hath more lovingly yielded than she?

THE DOVES OF SAINT MARK.

THREADING our way through alleys dark,
Lo! in a breadth of liberal sun,
Laughs the piazza of Saint Mark,
Gay with a triple Gonfalon;
Flies the flag of United Italy
Where the Winged Lion once pawed the air;
And the doves of Peace, on pure plumes, prettily
Flutter into the square.

Victor Emmanuel enters Rome,
Venice to-day joins festival
With Italy all, for deliverance come
From alien thrones and from priestly thrall.
But, divine with the Cross in which all believe,
No blot on the festa is that fair church,
Matched but in dreams or in pageants of eve,
Where the pigeons build and perch.

There, where that glory of marble and gold
And grand mosaic our faith exalts,
Moslemesque pinnacles manifold,
And Our Lord supreme in divinest vaults,
Lo! manes of the bronze steeds, curl and crown
Of carved foam live as in billowy coves,
White angels and martyrs, shake them down,
Saint Mark's immemorial doves!

From the Campanile, huge and high,
Where man, with the birds and the bells, may view
The Tyrol peaks on the northern sky,
And Adria's spousal ring of blue;
From the long arcades of the palace-fronts,
Out of the dazzle of soft blue air,
Swiftly, suddenly, all at once,
They come from everywhere.

None to startle them, none to molest,
Fearless as harmless, those ring-doves tame
Have been fed for centuries by bequest
Of a tender-hearted Venetian dame;
And as gentle a lady from over the sea
Calls them now to her lily hand,
A golden-grained cornucopia
Her symbol of command.

All about her those lovely things
Float, and flutter, and perch, and coo,
With a glisten of wings, and of rainbow-rings
On the soft necks arching up to view.
Snowily gowned in purest white,
Their white plumes touch her like flakes of snow,

A more heavenly sight, O my heart's delight!
Charmed never this world below.

O my love and my treasure-trove!
Blissfully blest beyond words to speak,
A moment half jealous of even the dove
That pecks at thy shoulder and dainty cheek,
I smile at the thought; and thy form above
A vision of sweet Saint Mary bends,
Where a virginal charm with thy rose of love
Like the lily's perfume blends.

O simple doves to Madonna dear!
O lily-like Mary from over the sea!
Welcome, O people assembled here,
Their innocence to your jubilee!
For it seems most meet, as it is most sweet,
That by one from the world an Italian found,
With a rapture of peace and of grace complete,
Should Italy's joy be crowned.



LA FESTA DELLO STATUTO.

THE sunset heavens are all aglow,
Trumpets are blown and roses blow,
And gales of fragrance and melody flow
Round aloes and palms of the Pincian,
Where a brilliant Corso seems to grow
In endless procession, rolling slow
Through the populous garden, to and fro,
Over against the Vatican,

Whose vast white silence thunders No,
And smites, a self-imprisoned woe,
In the face of the Roman's holiday show.

Beyond, on the ridge Janiculan,
Umbrella pines in funereal row
Frown darkly, and infinite shadows throw
On the level light. Like a halo of snow,
In tinge the mid-ribbon of a rainbow,

Above yon dome metropolitan
A cloud-ring floats; in the nave below
A worshipper, licking the floor, doth go
On his knees to kiss bronze Peter's toe —
Religion grovelling in dust, as though
An Ariel sunk to a Caliban!

Ere evening glides into the gloam,
Through the Villa Medici's sombre bloom
To the crest of the Mountain of Gardens clomb,

Lo! the whole circuit Aurelian!
How martyrs' dust from the catacomb
Blossoms in many a swelling dome,
More richly gilt by the sunset's chrome —
High-altar, perchance, an Apostle's tomb,
The outside steps a beggar's home —

Far as the desolate Cælian,
And the statues tossed in air like foam
From the roof of the lordly Lateran!
The gods are dethroned in the Pantheon;
But ruinous walls, like the crumbling loom
Of a once world-shaking thunder-boom,
Crop, here and there, out of Cæsar's Rome,
And the grandeur that was Republican.

From Flaminian gate to the Aventine,
From the Borgo to the Quirinal,
In Campus Martius, on Esquiline
And the Trastevere — bell and shrine —

Towers the Rome Pontifical;
With the Bambino, a doll benign,
Miraculous cure in its jewel shine,
On the seat of Jove Capitoline.

But Rome still rules Imperial
In the region of the Palatine.
But a boulevard lords it, lofty and fine
In insolence of youth, on the Viminal.

Musing, I watch the sun decline,
Revealing a golden thread of brine
Beyond the Campagna's sea-like line,
Till in that Hesperian burial
The day with its thoughts has gone to join
The ages dead and the ghosts divine

Of the men of the Forum and Capitol.
But, land of brotherly palm and pine!
Land of the olive and the vine!
Land of Latin and Sabine!

A future of glowing hope is thine;

For a Star in the East ethereal,
The Star of Liberty, thine and mine,
Pours light in a joyous flood, like wine
To the weary watchers for a sign —
New-risen o'er snowy Apennine

On the Rome of Victor Emmanuel.

'Tis night, but the city is noisy and gay
With crowds on crowds that mingle and flow —

An under-sweep of majestic sway
From the past, heard near and far away,
The voices of yore and of yesterday —
To the Tiber; and, lo! the girondola,
In fiery fantasies of display,
On the Castle of Saint Angelo!

HOLY WEEK IN ROME.

CHURCH OF TRINITÀ DEI MONTI.

I.

HOLD thy deep breath, grand organ, here,
While the roof darkens like a sky
Black with the brooding thunder! Near
The altar let the glimmer die
Of wavering candles, one by one;
And leave one faithful lamp alone,
Half hidden in the gloom austere —
A lamp of love unwearied!

II.

Bid time and space be cancelled here!
From Judah's ancient place of tombs
The voice of her sublimest seer
In hoary lamentation comes:
In prophet-woes of Jeremiah,
The after-wail for a Messiah,
The agony intoning clear —
And all the world is dreary.

III.

Christ's Passion — Nature's horror — see!
Yet faint not thou, O cordial spark!

Which on deserted Calvary
Shows loving women, drenched in dark
And drowned in tears. How black the sky!
And how that long, lone anguish-cry
Blinds like the lightning! Thrillingly
Begins the *Miserere*.

IV.

Dies the lament into a moan,
Half soars the chant, then quavers low;
Subdued to mournful monotone,
Now music's mellowest surges flow,
Where woman's facile sympathy
Flows mingling. So the Marys by
The cross wept and sepulchral stone —
O plaintive *Miserere*!

V.

Precious your grief, sweet chorister,
Anointing thus the feet of Christ!
Weep amber, like the bird; weep myrrh,
Like dropping trees imparadised
In Eastern air; weep frankincense —
Thou couldst no balmier redolence
Than those true tears to Heaven prefer!
Weep, moaning, *Miserere*!

VI.

Moan no more *Miserere* lorn,
Though the Lord Jesus lieth cold,
For he is man of woman born,
And at his tomb the stone is rolled.
Moan no more: he is God: the light
Is dawning on the second night,

Inaugural with the Easter morn —

Moan no more, *Miserere!*

VII.

Red lights on Roman armor play,

Where, drenched in sleep, grim soldiers lie,
Torch-fires affronting, as they sway,

The one Star in the morning sky.

Come women thither in the dawn,

And, lo! an angel throned thereon,

The tomb's great stone is rolled away!

Moan no more, *Miserere!*

VIII.

Whom here ye seek with weep and wail,

Lo! rent His shroud, and void the prison.

Unquenched from death, doth Love prevail

Divinely, like yon Star arisen

All-beautiful, and meek as brave.

Last at the cross, first at the grave,

The Saviour greets you with All Hail!

Thrice Ave, Ave Mary!

IX.

'Tis Easter — Sabbath — morning — spring,

And man's great hope is born in balm.

Hosanna in the Highest! sing;

Sing, Hallelujah to the Lamb!

Falls on the shrine a beam divine

From that far morn in Palestine,

And whispers, 'mid all pomps of psalm,

The Lord's own Ave Mary.

THE BELLS OF FLORENCE.

I STAND by Giotto's gleaming tower,
In gloom of the cathedral's wing,
And hear, in the soft sunset hour,
The bells to benediction ring.
That Duomo boasts: "Stone upon stone,
Eternally I rise and rise;
So, pace by pace, zone over zone,
I am upronded to the skies."
But simpler effort, as direct
As that of palm or pine, impels
This wonder of the architect
To strike heaven's blue with clash of bells.

Etrurian Athens! long ago
Thy sister of the Violet Crown,
In colonnades like carven snow —
All crumbled now, and bare, and brown
With ashes of dead sunshine — sate
Among her gods, and had no voice
Potential as their high estate
To summon to the sacrifice.
Worth even the Phidian Jove sublime,
Chryselephantine, and all else
Of the lost forms of olden time,
Fair Florence! are thy living bells.

O bells! O bells! when angels sang,
Surely — though no evangelist

Has told — a silvery peal first rang,
And Christian chimes came in with Christ.
For bells! O bells! not brazen horn,
Nor sistrum, sackbut, cymbals, gong,
Harsh dissonance of creeds forlorn,
But your sweet tongues to Him belong;
Crowning with music as ye swing
This lily in stone, this lamp of grace,
Wherever Christ the Lord is king,
Ye have commission and a place.

This tower stands square to winds that smite,
Nor fears the thunders to impale.
Prince of the Powers of Air! by rite
Of baptism shall the bells prevail.
Shine, Stella Maris! and, O song
Of Ave Mary, and vesper bells,
Be drowned not in the city's throng!
For — sad and sweet as Dante tells —
Comes, strangely here, the sense to me
Of parting for some unknown clime,
A sense of silence and the sea,
Charmed by the tryst of star and chime.

O bells! O bells! the worlds are buoyed,
Like beacon-bells, on waves profound,
In all no silence as no void —
The very flowers are cups of sound.
We dream — and dreaming we rejoice —
That we, when great Death draws us nigh,
Hearing, may understand the Voice
Which rocks a bluebell or the sky;

And, with new senses finely strung
In grander Eden's blossoming,
May see a golden planet swung,
Yet hear the silver lilies ring!



“THE LAST ROSE OF SUMMER.”

ON the romantic shore of Lake Lucerne,
Beneath my window are some garden walks,
Where now the autumnal frosts the foliage burn,
And hardy dahlias blacken on their stalks;
But, many-leaved and fresh and fragrant, blows
One solitary flower — a perfect Rose.

This, full of crimson life as if it had
No thought of death, I've watched, day after day,
While deep in snows the Rigi-Kulm was clad,
And deep the snows in clefts of Pilate lay —
Grim mount! above the clouds whose sharp-drawn
peaks
Have long presaged the storm — and now it breaks.

Like ships at sea, St. Gothard's summits strain,
And toward Tell's chapel all the storied scene
Is dashed with slanted streaks of misty rain;
There's not a spot of color or of sheen
In the dull landscape save that lonely Rose —
Leaden the sky, and gray the very snows!

With all of blushes and all fragrance rife,
Love's fragile banner to the gale unfurled,

Bloom bravely on! Yea, live thy little life,
O Rose! I would not pluck thee for the world.
'Twere sentimental folly that would shed
Thy sentient leaves to strew yon sodden bed.

"I am the type of the true poet's thought;
I am the type of the true lover's heart," —
These words, in melody of perfumes wrought,
Like notes of music did the flower impart —
"In gray-haired age my youth is fresh; I bloom
Up to the 'ice and blackness' of the tomb.

"Thou in the flesh, and in my petals I,
Are shadows; but a Soul is thine and mine.
I am a Vision, and a Prophecy!
And that which makes the poet's thought divine,
And love a subtler revelation still,
Is far more real than yon rock-ribbed hill.

"A few short days, or hours, and I am gone.
But, lingering here, last of a happy race,
Into my bosom all thou lookest on
I gather up — but clothed in summer's grace;
And I shall hang forever in thy mind,
A mystic Rose, immortally refined.

"Yea, these my perfumes shed shall hit thy sense
With spiritual power when I am dust.
Perchance the last survivor, æons hence,
Of men shall be a Poet, and his trust,
The perfect flower of Manhood, shall resign,
As I the perfect Rose, to Love Divine."

NIAGARA.

I SING Niagara. I, whose failing limbs
Faltered in presence of its majesty,
Whose hand has feebly touched its garment's hem, —
Like charmed Endymion, when, in flowing robes
Of dusky silver, Dian swept the woods,
An awful goddess! — I lift up my voice,
Weak as a petrel's, under fearful eaves
Of foaming surges, piping to the gale,
And sing: the mighty Spirit of the Flood
Commands me, as the hand an instrument.
So a stray swallow, who hath built his nest
In roof of some cathedral vast and grand,
What time the solid arches seem to soar
Dilating with the deepening organ tones,
Might chirrup forth his little note of praise;
So, trembling on the verge of the Infinite,
The lowliest of God's winged worshippers
Fails not in orison with his one harp,
Undrowned by choral thunders of the spheres.

Niagara! I have heard at noon of night,
In utter calm, the great Pacific pour
Its multitudinous leagues of billowy swell
Upon the unsheltered coast of Oregon,
With startling crash and long reverberate roll;
And, voyaging the interluent sea
By Madagascar north to Mozambique,
Have been appalled by the tornado's wrath,
The terriblest of thunder surging thick,
With deafening peal on peal, through deluge-sheets

Of blinding fire and rain. The morning came,
And, 'mid the sights and sounds of busy day,
I heard or heeded not the tumbling surf;
The tempest passed, and o'er the polished wave
Blew paradisial airs from Indian isles.
Yea, I have felt the fury of 'Typhoon,
Before whose unimaginable roar
The dwarfed artillery of clouds were dumb —
A monster meteor, swift in havoc! Thou,
Majestic waterfall! in thy slow march
Of ages, wearing down the long ravine,
Know'st not of other change; thou hast no moods
Of peace and war, resounding ever on
With ceaseless volume of vast inland seas,
In tumult grand as Jove's serenity!
Oh! when the sons of God had ceased to shout
Above thee, in the morning of the world,
Thou hadst commission, fittest after them,
To chant the story of Omnipotence:
The same as ever since thy solemn voice
Has told it to the silent centuries,
I see and hear thee now — Niagara!

Alone in Nature — what is like to thee? —
My fancy, seeking type and parallel,
Soars to the grandeurs of the moral world.
Behold! the magic war King Solomon
Waged with the Genii of the elements
Is fought before us: Afrites of the Storm
Still tossed into the pit, and trampled down,
Yet rise against him in great vapory crowds!
Again the strife of gods and demigods
Is clashed in thunder. Is 't the Morning Star,

With one-third part of all the ethereal host,
Goes flashing down the crystal steeps of Heaven?
Or Saturn, with Hyperion and his peers,
Hurl'd into Hades from the Olympian heights?
Satanic or Titanic, from the abyss
They climb the inevitable rolling doom,
And for the summit writhe with misty arms.

There is an island, anchored in mid-flood,
Makes twain the overwhelming torrent: here,
Sublime the living wall of luminous foam!
But pause not; dizzy Tower and Table Rock
Stand full-faced by the mightier sister fall;
There, awed to rapture, sing: — "O wonderful!
Not, from the leap, like other cataracts,
On shallow ledges shattered into spray,
From dazzling summits dashed down helplessly;
But, in the hollow of thy crescent form,
Swelling up grandly to the very brink,
Green and profound, as if the dreadful plunge
Were normal to thy billowy curve; or as,
In the old days before the world was round,
Beyond the pillars huge of Hercules,
Beyond Atlantis, from earth's outer verge,
The whole broad ocean rolled serenely off
Into the boiling hell of Phlegethon!
Bewildering, beautiful, and terrible!
I gaze — and gaze — till the long woods, the rocks
And isles, the very arching heavens, have lost
Their steadfastness, and are a part of thee:
The Earth from its fixed moorings swept and gulfed
In watery chaos!"

Tarry yet awhile :

There shall come gentler influence; and, thy brain
Grown cool again, with calmer accents sing : —
“ O charming hues and harmonies of grace,
Pervading, blending with, and conquering all,
Speak, and make manifest, — ere yonder sun
Shall cease, slow-westerling toward those woodlands
dark,
To pour full glory on the gleaming Falls, —
How Beauty, or of tint or tone, may sit
In Terror's lap, unfearing and unharmed!
Prove it, ye preachers of a lovely Truth,
With lips Heaven's altar-coals have touched with
fire!

Ye golden lights, that interpenetrate
The unfathomed green; and, through a thinner veil,
Reveal the rich-brown coloring of the rocks!
Ye glancing shadows from yon reddening clouds,
Like streamers of the auroral arch reversed!
Ye wreaths of foam, whereof each glow-worm star
And white-rose garland is as exquisite
Of mould, and floats — even on Niagara's side
Unconscious of the clamor — airily
As melting crystals of the noiseless snow;
Frailer than flower-boats Hindoo maidens launch
On the rough Ganges, that drift seaward down
With love-lamps brightly burning to the last!
And chief, ye trembling iridescent rays,
An aureole wheresoever curls the mist;
And on the cataract's tremendous front
Displayed in one magnificent Rainbow! Hark!
There come up voices from the abyss of Time;

I stand with gray old Noah; and lo! in Heaven,
 The shining covenant of the living God
 O'erhangs the clouded peak of Ararat;
 Whose every chasm and awful ravine roars
 With the retiring Deluge!"

Father! God!

With Splendors and Dominions, Thrones and Powers,
 With angel and archangel, man bows down
 In reverent adoration, whensoever
 Creation shadows forth Thy arm of might!
 But Thou hast blessed us in the Beautiful,
 Which crowneth all things, — bole and stem with
 blooms,
 The exhalation with the sunset's pomp.
 The human impulse, climbing to the light;
 It charms this headlong and remorseless tide;
 The everlasting turbulence is Thine,
 But Thine, too, is the smiling Bow of Grace;
 And Thine — though earth may quake and thunder
 peal —
 The still small voice, that whispers, Peace — and
 Love!



THE APPROACH OF MARS, 1877.

A DUSK as of the gods! Grows rich the sky
 In planets, bearing names of gods, whose eyes
 Shoot lightnings on an age that dares deny
 Them and all manner of divinities.

Alone Love's planet. the pure Star of Even,
 Sinks in the sun's departing splendor soon;

While Jupiter's white disk in southern heaven
Is kindling, and floats up the harvest moon —

Floats up, but lurid in eclipse. Oh! hide
In the earth's shadow, Queen of fruitful Night!
Tread closer in those shining footprints — glide,
Venus Urania, to the sheltering Light!

For lo! a planet, red as if with ire,
Rides lord of the ascendant: as he comes,
The air is shaken as with the wind of fire,
As with a trumpet's call or roll of drums:

A planet hostile to all arts of peace,
To golden harvest, and to happy home,
Ruled by the Ares of distracted Greece,
The conquering Mars of sanguinary Rome.

Move from eclipse, O moon! Unknown before,
Mars shows us moons to match thy circle soft;
So near the two worlds draw, like ships of war,
With battle-lanterns lit and lamps aloft.

Summer to summer they approach, the rage
Of our hot tides at ebb and his at flood —
Who shall conceive that crimson foliage,
Whose glowing changes are of flame and blood?

And near in angle, though in space apart,
Malignant Saturn is with Mars allied;
Twin lords of fate, cold hate and burning heart,
The greater and the less Infortune, ride.

I write in language of the astrologer,
And fain would read this gleaming horoscope.
What hope in culminating Jupiter?
In the sweet patience of the moon, what hope?

What hope for earth? Shall man for evermore
Be somewhere butchering his fellow-man?
Still shall thine evil star, O god of war!
Grudge life, love, happiness, their little span?

To-day the columns of the North are poured,
In fiery crusade, on the Islamite;
Religion draws her ever-ready sword,
Crescent and Cross, unsparingly to smite.

All Europe murmurs, jealous passions seethe,
Wait martial hosts on statesmen saturnine.
The British Lion, sharpening claws and teeth,
Growls thunder o'er the City of Constantine.

Again the old knights in cross-legged effigy
May rise up at the nineteenth century's work,
Richard's bones rattle to the battle-cry:
"Saint George for merry England and the Turk!"

But yesterday we hailed, with equal pride,
A new Republic in its proud advance;
The baton now of a liberticide
May loose the dogs of war to throttle France.

Yet whatsoe'er of movement retrograde
Apparent in the heavens may be, we know

That to a forward march, in order swayed,
The seasons and the cycles come and go;

That, though a violent hand set back the clocks,
Not backward on the dial the shadow moves;
That, for all thunder-storms and battle-shocks,
The world will spin right on in jarless grooves.

O sweet! from our fair land, its field of stars,
Hath passed the eclipse — the horror of an hour:
In white calm may yon kinglier orb than Mars
Behold unfold full many a century-flower!

O sweet! through cool green trees the Pleiads rise
In choral dance — the silvery cymbals beat —
And rings, far-echoing from Sabæan skies,
The challenge: Canst thou bind their influence
sweet?

Misread were aspects of the signs, whereof
The elder star-seer fashioned fates malign.
There is no law in heaven and earth but Love,
Or, failing Love, then nothing is divine.

CASTELLAMARE.

CANTO I.

PARTHENOPE.

" Naples, thou Heart of men, that ever pantest
 Naked, beneath the lidless eye of Heaven !
 Elysian city, that to calm enchantest
 The mutinous air and sea ! they round thee, even
 As Sleep round Love, are driven."

SHELLEY.

" Where the gorgeous East, with richest hand,
 Showers on her kings barbaric pearl and gold."

MILTON.

I.

THE House, a huge, three-storied, rambling pile,
 With arched foundations builded in the cliff,
 And square tower, in Italian rustic style,
 Shows more a landmark to the fisher's skiff
 Than the proud Frederick's hoary castle even,
 Whose name to ancient Stabia has been given.

II.

Scarce Quisisana, bowered in glad-green trees,
 A Belvidere of happier site commands.
 On one of many wooded buttresses,
 That prop Saint Angelo's cloudy crags, it stands;
 Just where it ends abrupt, with scarpéd face
 Fronting the bay-shore city at its base.

III.

High up, like greensward on the mountain slopes,
 Rolls the rich verdure of the chestnut woods.

A rocky glen, half soft, half savage, scoops
The near hills; sometimes wild with wind and floods;
But that is seldom; in this sunny clime
The seasons flow more smoothly than my rhyme.

IV.

The purple light of love sleeps on the hills,
And dreams in wild flowers; everywhere the rose
And violet mingle in voluptuous thrills
Of color and of fragrance; even the snows
Of the starred daisy show pink under-tips,
As faintly red as young Aurora's lips.

V.

Love's proper garland the soft myrtle twines,
Peeps the forget-me-not's sweet-hearted blue;
The dove-eyed flower of the verbena-vines
Is delicate with shades of lilac hue;
Drapes the misembryanthemum the crags
With blooms like banners — Love's triumphal flags.

VI.

Wherever in the woodland paths you tread,
The common herbs, that crush beneath the feet,
A spicy, penetrating odor shed,
As if in Love's land everything were sweet;
But perilous in the weed's that passion-dower,
Lest pungence ripen into poisonous flower.

VII.

O Cytherean zone of Napoli!
A prodigality of love is thine,
When moonlight melts into thy sunset sea
Like Cleopatra's pearl dissolved in wine;

And on Vesuvius is that wondrous hue
Nameless, which to imagine you must view.

VIII.

A color-phantom born of day and night,
Of vapor and volcanic smoke and all
The darker edges of the broken light,
Dusk-red and indigo, a purpureal pall,
Makes the black scoria of the cone to glow
As if half-lighted from the fires below.

IX.

Night falls; their inarticulate reproof
The stars look, their uncomprehended story.
The mountain fades; but on its side aloof
Rolls the red lava in infernal glory.
As break in a spring-freshet blocks of ice,
Hills crumble down its fiery precipice.

X.

And lights terrestrial kindle shore and bay,
While Heaven and Hell confront each other thus.
And Love his flambeau burns. Where many a ray
On the lip-rippling wave is tremulous
Some heart of fire a fiery sweetness yields,
Like the wine ripened on Phlegrean fields.

XI.

Sea of the Siren! O Parthenope!
Thy liquid sapphires melt in music yet,
While summer winds seem, in low symphony,
To sweep Æolian lyres of golden fret.
Sweet odors sigh, caressing and caressed,
And faint upon thy gently heaving breast.

XII.

A short voluptuous life they live — and die;
Such was their fate, O dulcet nymph! of old,
Who trusted thy beguiling melody,
Thy wanton azure arms and locks of gold.
No mercy in the cruel eyes may be
Of any creature of the hungry sea.

XIII.

I visited the Siren's isles — so called.
They lie near Capri. A poor nuptial den,
Those bare rocks, for the minstrelsy-enthralled,
But fit to whiten bones of foolish men.
The faint surf to my dreams an echo gave,
And glossy shoulders glimmered through the wave.

XIV.

Oh! that the oldest legend of Love's clime
Should teach that Love leads to destruction! This
Recalls me to the purpose of my rhyme,
A modern tale that joins not bliss to kiss.
The Paphian or the Gorgon zone might gird her,
The heroine of my story — Love or Murder.

XV.

"The house is haunted, O Signore!" said
Pretty Lucia, trembling, as she crossed
Herself. "Deh! often, when I lie in bed,
I hear, though I have never seen, the ghost —
The horse's ghost — tramp — tramp in the upper story."
Whereat I murmured, "The Commendatore!"

XVI.

"*Altro!* His horse, Signore — the old Commander's —
You have heard — or, holy Mary! have you seen?"

I shook my head. "Well, then, they say he wanders —
You frightened me, for it is he I mean —
Riding his Arab steed, all spotless white,
About these halls, on every stormy night.

XVII.

"The house, you see, is full of spacious halls,
And there is room enough. And the horse neighs,
And he laughs loud when thunder shakes the walls;
And oh! his uniform is all ablaze
With fire-eyed diamonds, like a serpent's crest,
When the live lightning flashes on his breast.

XVIII.

"His face is blue with a great agony;
They say he died in sufferings horrible;
And yet he laughs with that infernal glee
Whene'er — a dreadful thing 'tis even to tell —
The lightning shows him, cowering by his side,
The yet more livid features of his bride."

XIX.

"How know you this, if you have never caught
Sight of these ghosts, Lucia?" She replied,
"They say so." "Who?" "Many. My mother thought
She saw them — and with fright she almost died —
One dark, wild night, when they had failed to close
The great hall-door, that slammed her from repose."

XX.

"Filippo's donkey strayed in." "How absurd!
You jest — we thought my mother would not live."
The answer was conclusive; so we heard,
Without irreverence, her whole narrative.

'Twas a dark tale, with little circumstance,
That had some touches of a wild romance.

XXI.

The young Francesco was of noble birth,
But poor, and early left his native land,
To try what fortune other spots of earth
Might yield the adventurous heart and ruthless hand;
A youth, strong-willed and keen beyond his years,
Not given to conscience-qualms or foolish fears.

XXII.

He wandered to the Indies far away,
And of his after-life was nothing known,
Until, with brow grown grave and hair grown gray,
When years twoscore, or nearly two, had flown,
He reappeared his memory to recall,
And bore the title of a General.

XXIII. •

What colors had he marshalled, or what corps?
Whom served? Or had he only served himself?
What was the gorgeous uniform he wore?
For he had held command, and gathered pelf.
His tone, at times, betrayed the imperious chief,
And wealth was his that almost passed belief.

XXIV.

Yet was his rank enrolled not at Bombay,
Nor yet at Buitenzorg, nor Mozambique,
Nor at Manila. In what India
Of all the Orient lay his course oblique?
The stars are numbered in their courses true,
The meteor writes no record in the blue.

XXV.

In the far East, deep in the torrid zone,
Beneath the burning equinoctial line,
There lies the loveliest lake of ocean known,
A piece of heaven in purest hyaline,
A stiller Mediterranean in vignette,
A soft marine in virent emerald set.

XXVI.

Sumatra, Java, Borneo, fence it round,
And the Malay peninsula to the north,
And smaller isles yet more compress its bound,
And form a strait, where ships go back and forth
Between the land of tea and ivory fans
And outside regions of barbarians.

XXVII.

Sweep by the meteor-maelstroms of Typhoon,
The enchanted gates admit but summer showers,
The ships sail thither on the swift monsoon,
And zephyrs waft them o'er those coral bowers;
But bowers of stone form treacherous reefs, that lurk
To aid the pirate in his demon's work.

On Java's sea, how calm a moon
Sits empress of the tides!
On Java's sea, by night or noon,
What beauty there abides!

By sunlight as serenely lulled
As moonlight, with the glow
Of sapphire and of emerald
In its translucent flow.

As floats the lotus or the lily
On lakes, by river-brims,
With flowery disks in dimples stilly
The live Porpita swims.

And there, with sinnous-shining wakes
Lapsed as in lucid oil,
The lithe and velvet water-snakes
In elfin gambols coil.

With coats blue-black, vermilion-flecked
Like drops of fire; some barred
Green, golden-brown, or silvery, decked
And dappled as the pard.

The winds are pillowed on the clouds
In slumber, rosy-white,
While noon-heats veil with purple shrouds
The noon's too glowing light.

The skies, the clouds, the shores, the floods,
Are fixed as pictured things;
The ship sits as a halcyon broods,
Alight with folded wings.

How lovingly the sunbeams gild
And dimpling water coils,
There where the cooing ring-doves build
In those delicious isles! —

Isles, mangrove-fringed, with central towers
Of mightiest banyan, glooms

Of glossy bamboo, champac flowers,
And parasitic blooms.

How silvery, beneath sun or moon,
The flash of dipping oars!
How darkly still, in heaven aboon,
The Rajah-Wallie sours!

But oh! for other scenes remote,
And for another sky!
Oh! waft me in some welkin-boat
Where other eagles fly!

Around my home the heaven is stern
With storm, and blind with snow;
But, where the ruddy hearth-fires burn,
What summer faces glow!

And Love, with furled wings, there alone
Reposes on the breast,
Which here, in this unruffled zone,
Is heaving with unrest.

XXVIII.

The breeze springs up — the sails its influence feel —
O sailor boy! your song is hardly sung,
When, hark! that ugly grating of the keel!
And, like a bow unbent, the masts have sprung!
Out boats and anchors! Heave with mighty strain!
Work cheerily, men! Like heroes! Work in vain!

XXIX.

Your bark lies broken on the rocks — a wreck!
Lo! the lone eagle, screaming, flies away,

That in the sky has hung, a lurid speck,
To tell his brother Rajah of his prey :
The pale-faced Rajah of those cruel shores —
With night comes Death, on silver-flashing oars !

XXX.

What linked Francesco's name with scenes like these?
Nothing. There were dark rumors, to be sure ;
But common in the East are piracies ;
And dead men tell no tales. Gold, too, can cure
A spotted reputation : few demand
How clean may be the full and liberal hand.

XXXI.

He built him halls on many a lordly site,
In his own peerless land. This man of blood,
If such in truth he were, took strange delight
In the material world, — mount, field, and flood.
He chose for his abode his Stabian house,
And thither, when he married, brought his spouse.

XXXII.

It is not difficult to understand,
The dim Religion such as he, or worse,
May cherish for the Beautiful and Grand ;
For Nature never spake Kehama's curse.
And it is sweet to think, howe'er we err,
She has a smile for every worshipper.

XXXIII.

To her vast catholic temple we may win
Unquestioned if by pope or priestling shriven.
She asks not what our sorrow, what our sin.
To her blue sky we give the name of Heaven,

And it is full of blessings. Happy we,
If on a pure heart falls its charity!

XXXIV.

Whether there lingered in Francesco's mind
A vein of finer feeling unaware,
Or the exuberant wilds of Orient Ind —
Remorseless, murderous though his dark career —
Had ripened powers recluse of glowing fancy,
Or he had studied arts of necromancy, —

XXXV.

The marvellous magic of that sorcerer's clime, —
And, like another Manfred, he could call
The spirits of the elements sublime,
He made him friends in glen and waterfall;
Even as thou, O Poet, in solitudes,
Hast a familiar chanting to thy moods.

XXXVI.

Happier Francesco's fate, if he had found
No mistress save the Enchantress of the Hills,
A misty phantom, whether rainbow-crowned
Or dark with tempest, powerless for ills.
Happier? Oh, no! the Fiend but bides his time:
The man of crime must perish by a crime.

CANTO II.

CLYTEMNESTRA.

"The Gorgon Hydra with its snakes,
Or Venus with her zone might gird her;
Of fiend and goddess she partakes,
And looks at once both Love and Murder."

UNKNOWN.

"Come as you came in the jungle,
And love as you loved me then,
When the tiger passions were in us,
Ere we were women and men."

W. W. STORY.

I.

THUS far my narrative bears little trace
Of young Lucia's words. In truth, I plied
After inquiry all about the place,
And facts and general gossip amplified
Into a proper romance — bit by bit,
As in a Chinese puzzle, made to fit.

II.

The tragedy had not the moss and mould,
Color and shade of time upon it — the scene
A modern country house. They were not old,
Whose parents could remember, or had been
Subordinates in the drama, when they died,
The rich East Indian and his peasant bride.

III.

The love of Nature was not strange in him
Who knew her tropic glory, on whose soul,
In manhood's zenith, southern Sirius shone;
But what, when age the blood should cool, control,

Was the strange passionate softness that possessed,
For an untutored girl, Francesco's breast?

IV.

Had the East taught him nothing? Wildly gleam
Those flame-like flowers — a vile and vivid snake!
Are those gazelle eyes mirrored in the stream? —
The fierce young tigress lolls and laps the lake!
How thick with blooms yon verdurous canopy! —
Away! it is the deadly Upas tree!

V.

“But, oh! how very lovely was Rosina,”
Lucia lisped, “as grandmamma has told.”
“Prettier than you?” laughed I. The *contadina*
Blushed like a rose. “Hush, sir, or I will scold!
The youths from far and near pronounced her *bella*,
And came to see her dance the *tarantella*.”

VI.

“One came too oft, as things went — though the thrills
Of virtuous love, says grandma, are not wrong.
She was a very Daughter of the Hills:
Her father was a brigand, bold and strong,
But very tender to his only child,
And brought her lovely presents from his wild

VII.

“And lonely cave on Mount Saint Angelo.
These brigands are a cruel set, I fear,
Who, when resisted, deal the deadly blow;
Or cut, they say, a little piece of ear
From the poor captive, sealing it in a letter
Demanding ransom — sooner sent the better.

VIII.

"But then, you see, we only know these things
By rumor, and to us they are never rough.
They come among us, free as birds on wings,
And make them merry — jolly souls enough.
It is a point of honor not to tell —
And yet, I sometimes think, it is not well.

IX.

"This Lupo was the chieftain of a gang,
In youth a soldier and deserter: she
Betrayed the lawless blood from which she sprang,
When but a romping kitten at his knee.
Strange that the Pirate Chief of Gaspar Strait
Should in a Brigand's child have met his fate!

X.

"On ravin, like a wolf, or hawk, or pike,
He lived, and loved his daughter. Bold and bright,
Her eyes, though glorious, made them very like —
But, Santa Barbara! his soul was white
Compared to hers, or, rather, what it became
Ere she was burned alive in inward flame.

XI.

"And Lupo loved his daughter; but he died
A violent death, and she was left alone:
'Twas then that, riding on the mountain side,
The gorgeous General met her in her moan.
Not given to pity, yet he pitied her,
Dazzled with beauty, a moon-worshipper."

XII.

"Lucia grows poetic, Mary mine!
Actæon gazed upon the naked moon,

And then — we know the rest. Mark how divine
The goddess, this ambrosial eve in June,
With that fine crescent, like a pearl-bow bent
In violet pastures of the firmament!

XIII.

“Another night ere long we will behold her,
Full-faced in opposite heaven, above the glen;
But what, I have thought, if she should turn her shoulder,
And show the mysteries she hides from men?
Mother of secrets! Mistress of the tide!
Have moon-struck mortals seen thy darker side?

XIV.

“Ancestral fable haunts Neapolis,
A nymph of Hellas seems this mountain maid —
Francesco's destined bride and Nemesis —
Who maddened him at sight, Lucia said:
Such nymph as 'twas delirium to behold
In groves of Ida or on moonlight wold.

XV.

“Pardon, Lucia!” She went on to tell
That they were wed. “The girl made no demur.
In sooth, it seemed a thing incredible
That the great General thus should stoop to her.
He was not old — so very old, at least —
And he had brought such diamonds from the East!

XVI.

“But this was very wicked, if no worse
Had been; for she was false as false could be.
The General, from his heart and liberal purse,
Showered on her splendor and idolatry.

But all Rosina's love Antonio had;
She never knew a mother, and — was bad.

XVII.

"The country-side he summoned to rejoice,
Gentles and dames, and simple villagers,
And he made radiant in all eyes his choice,
For never bride's apparel shone like hers.
'Like a king's daughter, glorious among women,'
The priest said, sighing, 'half angel and half demon.'

XVIII.

"But that was afterwards. None knew her then
For what she was, or, if so, did not speak.
The brightest vision vouchsafed human ken,
She moved that day, with triumph on her cheek.
But grandmamma, though she has never tired
Of telling how they wondered and admired,

XIX.

"Says, that not even in clouds of silk and lace
Was she so startling in her loveliness
As when she used, as mistress of the place,
In wild profusion on her peasant's dress
To hang her jewels — " But here more gorgeous verse
Than the maid's prattle should the scene rehearse.

XX.

Uncork the vials of summer! Burn pastilles!
Till the air cloy with attar-of-rose and musk!
Oppress the sense of perfume till it reels,
With the rich Cereus blooming in the dusk!
Carve groves of sandal into cabinets!
Shake odors strong as death from fountain jets!

XXI.

Odors as strong as death, yet sweet as love!

Let curtains of intensest crimson fall,
Intense almost to blackness, from above,

With rich, warm glow pavilioning the hall!
Let music, with voluptuous swell the while,
Move like the dancing women of the Nile!

XXII.

Such things should herald her, and weave and wind
Their spells around the Queen of Gnomes — but no!
Her simple presence was all these combined,

A sensuous sound and fragrance, sanguine glow,
And that strong, subtle magnet-charm attractive,
Not easy to describe in strains didactic.

XXIII.

Some women have it — others seem to want.

See that fair girl, with young cheek pure and pale!
The Bulbul were a ruffian hawk, to chant

His rose-song to the lily-of-the-vale.
That other, with the waving of her fan,
Wakes all the nightingales of Gulistan.

XXIV.

Rosina was a finely moulded creature,

Like a young panther in her savage grace,
With nothing delicate except in feature,

Whose lines were perfect as of Grecian race.
Her brow was rather Roman, level, low,
Arched over with her hair's abundant flow,

XXV.

Which was a marvel — but of that hereafter.

Her olive cheek shone pure as Parian marble;

Her voice — there was no melody in her laughter,
And, when she sang, no softness in her warble —
Had yet wild music in it, and something strange
Of passionate depth in its contralto range.

XXVI.

A little sullen in repose, the mouth
Of many a maiden in this land I have seen
Light up, like the warm sunshine of the south
In skies where thunder may be or has been;
And though the Italian face may cloud with storm,
Its frank, sweet smile is its peculiar charm.

XXVII.

Only in Italy and with little children
Prevails that wondrous, open-hearted smile.
But hers was different, though as bright, bewildering
Its positive sweetness and its latent guile.
A Cleopatra "toil of grace" the girl
Had in her luscious lips and teeth of pearl.

XXVIII.

Her hair and eyes — a moment let them pass,
Till we behold her in her masquerade.
The shadow gathers in my magic glass,
My wizard's charm is chanted and obeyed.
In diamonds and her contadina's dress,
She comes — a Corsair's bride and murderess!

XXIX.

Over her scarlet petticoat she wears
A shorter upper skirt of brightest blue;
Her snow-white chemise, loose and sleeveless, bares
Her arms and neck, and bosom half, to view;

A corselet of black velvet, open-laced,
Imprisons her luxuriant bust and waist.

XXX.

A Roman scarf over her shoulders thrown,
And lightly pinned in crosswise on her breast,
Shows all the colors of the Iris zone —
A dazzling vision, even without the rest!
With bare, brown feet, and free limbs lithe and tall,
Like a young panther bounding in the hall.

XXXI.

But ah! the blaze of jewels! Not alone
Of diamonds, fed on May-dew and pure flame,
But every form and hue of precious stone
With rich Francesco from the Orient came.
All gems, in solitary light or cluster,
Diaphanous or of opalescent lustre,

XXXII.

Wherein primordial fires which hardened them
Still burn and sparkle iridescently,
He brought; and likewise many a mystic gem
That rarely flashed to European eye.
He loved them, robbed for them on sea and land;
Perchance had sought them with a sorcerer's wand.

XXXIII.

Sapphire and ruby, emerald, amethyst,
Blood-red carbuncle, gold-green chrysoprase,
And opals on whose moons a gathering mist
The approach of danger or of death betrays,
Were alternate with diamonds, — and the sea
Its coral and pearls had yielded lavishly.

XXXIV.

Armlets and anklets, necklaces of gold,
That gleam with gems, her glowing roundness ring.
Her hair, a cataract of night, is rolled
Below her knee, in rich dishevelling;
And in its purple blackness is the blaze
Of a full Ethiop heaven's refulgent rays.

XXXV.

Sirius and hot Canopus, red as Mars
The Scorpion's heart, the Centaur's flaming hoofs,
Strange nebulous clouds and vari-colored stars,
Seem wildly woven in its tangled woofs;
Two sister fluctuant jewels on her brow
Throb like the double star on Argo's prow.

XXXVI.

That wondrous, changeful star! I have watched it
grow,
Night after night, from a mere point in heaven,
Till it would rise with planetary glow
Reflected, like another Star of Even;
And when it paled again, it seemed to leave
The sea more desolate and me to grieve.

XXXVII.

Cat's-eye and moonstone, on Rosina's forehead,
Blend a sinistral with a lovely light;
Save for its rarity, one to be abhorréd,
A green glare, seeming to dilate by night;
The other glorious as the crescent phase
Of Venus to the telescopic gaze.

XXXVIII.

And both were jewels of resplendent size,
And both were set in cabalistic signs,
And both were strangely like Rosina's eyes —
Both and yet neither — for the gleaming lines
Were always blended, never this nor that,
Never love only nor the tiger-cat.

XXXIX.

Behold Rosina's picture! If to array her
In this fantastic guise, when guests they had,
You wonder why her lord did not gainsay her, —
He was in love, and both were jewel-mad.
If she were tricked and spangled like an elf,
He wore a wealth of diamonds himself.

XL.

The picture fades, my incantation's over:
My wandering song to other scenes proceeds.
What sequel, when Rosina had a lover?
Barbaric tableaux changed to tragic deeds.
A harmless rustic he as milk and water,
A very plaything for the robber's daughter.

XLI.

Together on the mountains they had grown,
Like two wild creatures, from a girl and boy.
He was so beautiful, he was her own,
Her petted darling, her one passionate joy;
And she would rock his head upon her breast,
Like a young child's, and sing him into rest;

XLII.

And he lay rocked there, like an oarless boat
Entangled in the strong-armed ocean-kelp;

And, though alike in years, she seemed to gloat
Over him, like a leopard o'er her whelp.
Ere it grew sinful, the best trait she had
Was her devotion to this simple lad.

XLIII.

Poor stripling! into what a coil of crime
She lured him! "Hist! *bambino!* come to-night!"
Rosina murmured. "My ogre for a time
Has left me; we will have our old delight
In one another — come! my heart beats fast
To think that we may meet again at last!

XLIV.

"*Mio caro!* we will dance the *tarantella*,
Beneath the acacias, until sets the moon,
Or we will sing our merriest *ritornella*;
And then we'll banquet in the great saloon;
We will quaff kiss-soft wines that fire the heart —
And, dearest, we will but pretend to part!"

XLV.

Antonio came — once — many times — whene'er
Francesco went — as oft he went — to Rome.
With love inebriate they lost shame and fear,
And he was told what happened at his home.
He was a thing to pity when he heard —
Only his look! he never spake a word.

XLVI.

This man of many crimes, this murderer
And plunderer — if he had not been belied —
Had had a well of tenderness for her,
That half redeemed his nature: love and pride

Alike were outraged; dreadful was the shock,
As when a great ship strikes a sunken rock.

XLVII.

He did not kill her; for he loved her still,
Though in a different sort. The delicacy,
In his fierce Eastern life, had lost the thrill
Which shrinks from a pollution, it may be.
Yet had his love been generous, pure, and high,
As any being's underneath the sky;

XLVIII.

And when it was betrayed, dishonored, scorned,
Self-reverence died from it, and all ruth.
Love in true sense was into hatred turned.
But for this grand thing, in her glorious youth
And beauty, was his passion fervent still,
To toy with — torture — but he could not kill.

XLIX.

Some friend had warned him, and Antonio fled;
Or the ex-Rajah of the pirate isles
Had aimed to put him to such death as head
Or heart conceives not, save in the Eastern styles
Of vengeance — but, weak wretch! when tempests
lower,
The Wren will not desert his paramour!

She fawns upon her lord and fondles now.

Thinks she to soften, or but schemes revenge?
To soften? Ah! as likely to repent
Was her proud heart, she knew, as he relent.

IV.

She knew him and she feared him, or the feeling
Was most like fear that she was capable of.
Her awe, which fluttered hate, was but revealing
Of power in him that might have wakened love,
Had they but met ere — like a bauble — she
Had tossed away her pearl of chastity.

V.

Humiliation had no hotter hell
Than she endured; yet was his manner bland
And courteous, even kind; no angry swell
Disturbed his even accents of command.
O charmer! hold thy snake with steady eye!
Stealthy her coil — the spring comes by and by!

VI.

“Francesco mio!” she pleaded, and her eyes
Glowed on him like a newly wedded bride’s,
“You have left me much alone of late — it tries
One’s spirits — on your long and distant rides.
Promise me that to-night, after we sup,
Just for this once, you will not lock me up.

VII.

“Let me go with you to your turret-chamber,
But to sit still and keep you company.
I loved to climb there, — do you not remember?
Although the many queer things frightened me,

When first we were wed." He coldly answered, "Yes."
But his blood leaped and surged at her caress.

VIII.

She turned away her eyes — to veil their look.

That very eve and hour — the story ran —
Her boudoir-maid for admiration took

The casket that contained her wondrous span
Of chaplet-gems, and, gazing on their light,
Sudden she screamed, and dropped them in affright.

IX.

For, in a moment, o'er the moonstone came

A watery vapor, dimming all its sheen,
And from the cat's-eye darted tongues of flame,

Not light, but live flame of malignant green.
Howe'er this be, Francesco gave consent,
And to the tower in friendly form they went.

X.

He had fitted up that turret's topmost story

With various instruments and books profound,
Half laboratory, half observatory,

With a pierced roof and galleries around;
And, raised at will, a mighty telescope,
Up-looking, swept and searched the starry cope.

XI.

The vaulted roof was *lapis-lazuli*,

Traced with meridian and ecliptic lines,
With constellations in gold emblazonry;

And, crossing planets, moons, and Zodiac signs,
With mystic astrologic curves thereon,
Chaldaic Houses of the Heavens were drawn.

XII.

And furnaces, retorts, and crucibles
Were strangely mixed with science of the stars,
And ores, and minerals, and quicksilver wells,
Galvanic batteries and electric jars, —
And colored vials upon a shelf apart,
For use in chemic or alchemic art.

XIII.

On these — not as before on curious things,
That yet had pleased while they bewildered her —
Not on the skull, enclosed in triple rings
And mapped with many an occult character,
Which grinned upon a table by itself —
Rosina gazed — on nothing but that shelf.

XIV.

But furtively. On the gallery without
Francesco stepped, still visible from the chamber.
Star-splendor burst upon him like a shout
Of glory! The great breastplate of November,
Spangled with Hyads, Pleiads, and Orion,
Fronted the mountain-heights where coched the Lion.

XV.

“Four planets in three Houses of the Stars,”
He mused, “shone when I cast my horoscope.
Venus and Jupiter in conjunction — Mars
The lord of the ascendant — little hope
Of peace in that! and influence Saturnine
Was in the Scorpion’s bright and baleful sign.

XVI.

“That was in June. Now Jupiter alone
Of planets lords it visibly in the sky.

Is this propitious? Evil was foreshown,
And it has come. O Star of Destiny!
Sunk in the sea is Venus' golden barge:
'Thou, by bold Aldebaran beaming large,

XVII.

"Symbollest power in place of happiness.
I must recast my horoscope to-morrow,
For dark lines cross. O wicked Sorceress!"

He turned to her, muttering, in his bitter sorrow,
Regardful for some moments. Still as death
She stood, full-facing him with bated breath.

XVIII.

Had he but watched her as he watched the sky!
With white lips, round eyes fixed on him and burning,
Listening to her own heart-beats, stealthily,
No rustle, not a footfall, never turning,
With infinitesimal motion like sea-slugs,
She stole towards that cabinet of drugs.

XIX.

She saw him turn, and paused, if pause could be
In that still motion. Glancing in her eyes
With keen but unsuspecting scrutiny,
He soon resumed his starry reveries.
Those moments were like hours, brief as they were;
An agony of suspense she could not bear.

XX.

She made a bolder step — he did not hear —
Another and another. "Boundless space!"
He murmured, "Cosmic star-dust, sphere in sphere,
With the far-reaching telescope we trace

New planets almost nightly — unemployed
No corner of the Infinite — nothing void.

XXI.

“This night our own globe, in its annual orbit,
Moves through a mighty meteoric ring
Of rayless asteroids, each as we absorb it
Kindling to burning flame, and vanishing.
We know enormous orbs of darkness move,
Like those mere specks, through radiant fields above.

XXII.

“Like the lost Pleiad, an extinguished sun,
Or, shrivelled up his crown and seraph-robos,
That elder Morning Star, the Fallen One,
These demon-worlds, these thunder-stricken globes,
Do they perturb the planets in their courses,
And human fates, with their malignant forces?

XXIII.

“Are Good and Evil in the Universe
Material as moral? And in Sin
Had Earth alone her Eve and Serpent-curse?
Enough! 'Tis time the star-showers should begin.
Rosina, look!” And even as he spake,
A meteor burst in many a fiery flake.

XXIV.

She was beside him with a single bound,
Her eyes flashed like that meteor in the skies,
Her breath came with a panting, fluttering sound —
Was it to check her heart's tempestuous rise,
Or something to conceal, that to her breast
One hand she quickly raised and tightly pressed?

XXV.

She had it — held it in a nervous grasp —
Then dropped it in her boddice — a dainty thing
Made of one emerald, with a golden clasp
Over the stopper; by a silken string,
A parchment-label bore a death's-head grimly,
And faint scent clung to it like a death-mist dimly.

XXVI.

That seeming dew-drop in its jewel prison,
As in a curled leaf, that toy-concentration
Of crystal sparkle and of cruel poison,
Had had a basilisk's force of fascination
Over Rosina's eyes for many a day.
It troubled her — but wherefore who shall say?

XXVII.

Would not its delicate beauty and supreme
Horror have only shocked an innocent mind?
Let us not be unjust. No thought nor dream
Of conscious evil was with it combined,
When first it froze her with the mystic breath,
Which wraps, while yet in life, the doomed with death.

XXVIII.

"You startled me," she said, "I am so weak —
I am not well, Francesco!" And he gazed
Upon the trouble of her brow and cheek,
Now pallid and now flushing, half amazed
And wholly moved, with the old tenderness
That scorn for self or her could not repress.

XXIX.

How he had loved this girl! "Rosina, child!" —
And all this night he had a dignity

Superior to himself — he whispered mild:

“Be calm. Look out with me on yonder sky,
And see such pyrotechnical delights
As never dazed your eyes on festal nights.”

XXX.

Lo! phosphorescent points and threads of light
Weave a fine network o'er the welkin-roof;
And larger meteors, beautiful and bright,
Flash like rich star-flowers through a silken woof;
And, heralded by splendider surprises,
The constellation of the Lion rises!

XXXI.

Up from the mountain-heights that crest the valley,
As if the earth were flashing back to heaven,
High rocket-meteors shoot up vertically,
And melt in nebulous mists, like white smoke driven,
Or rain in fiery sparks, or burst in snow
Of emerald, orange, and deep crimson glow.

XXXII.

And Earth, her dusky shoulder still revolving,
Still lifts the Lion in the ascending scale;
Still brightlier bursting, flashing and dissolving.
Those fire-balls turn the wondering Sirius pale;
Clouds the white calm of Jupiter, to behold
Great, grandly-moving, planet-disks of gold.

XXXIII.

The point Zodiacal whence these diverge,
Or mostly radiate, rises high and higher.
The splendor culminates. Like a mighty surge,
A host of meteors breaks in surf of fire;

And all the heavens are rolled in foam, with trails,
And wreaths, and luminous streaks like comets' tails.

XXXIV.

They listened as to hear the rush and roar
And thunder of those cataracts — all was still,
Still as the waveless sea upon the shore,
Still as the breezeless chestnuts on the hill,
Still as the voiceless stars, far-fixed above
That Dance of Death, in pale and patient love.

XXXV.

'Twas picture all. In silence the Red Sea
Had swallowed Pharaoh and his glittering host,
Chariots and horses, bannered blazonry,
And spear-heads keen in frothing crimson tost.
Along the Zodiac opaline light increased,
Like Israel's pillar pointing up the East.

XXXVI.

Day's harbinger, it faded in the gray
Of early dawn; the meteors had grown dim,
Ere, with his wife, Francesco turned away.
That night had worked strange influence upon him;
And she, with her revenge against her heart,
Had almost whispered to the Fiend — Depart!

XXXVII.

I know not how it was, but she had been
So softened by returning gentleness,
So awe-struck by his majesty of mien,
Remorse, nay, love even, strove with silent stress.
Or, it may be, the very power she held
The perturbations of her wrath had quelled.

XXXVIII.

That morning, later, — miserable hap! —
Intelligence was to Francesco brought
That his young rival had ventured near a trap
Which had been set for him. Should he be caught!
His brow grew dark — his slow-returning mood
Of kindness set as in a sea of blood.

XXXIX.

He left, and shut Rosina in her room.
Had he but trusted her! The girl was changed,
Or changing. On the very brink of doom,
Her guardian-angel, never all estranged,
With its last awful effort to avert
The Inevitable, struggled in her heart.

XL.

Is it not awful? When the still, small Voice
Calls the stray wanderer to the fold again,
And Heaven's supreme beatitudes rejoice,
The ways of Providence seem plain to men.
But wherefore should it speak, if it avail
But to lend horror to the lost one's wail?

XLI.

It cannot be. This strife of Good with Ill,
Even in the front of Fate, hath mightier scope.
It strives with an indomitable will,
Strives with the immortality of Hope.
And if it save one thought — though darker the deed —
That thought to all eternity will plead!

CANTO IV.

NEMESIS.

"Now fare thee well, auld Nickie ben,
And wad ye tak a thought, and men',
Ye aiblins might — I dinna ken —

Still hae a stake.

I'm wae to think upon yon den,
Even for your sake."

BURNS.

"This even-handed justice
Commends the ingredients of the poisoned chalice
To our own lips."

SHAKESPEARE.

I.

FRANCESCO home returned at even-song,
No vesper-orison singing in his soul.
He had been balked. Rosina, all day long,
In fury which she sought not to control,
Wild with a sense of wrong, of having repented,
Paced like a caged beast, raved like one demented.

II.

She calmed herself with violent endeavor,
And with a pale face met her moody lord —
No more to part in life. "The servants never
Knew what transpired at that evening board,"
Lucia said, "till startled by such screams
As, months thereafter, curdled in their dreams.

III.

"They huddled in, all terrified. On the floor
Their master lay, a cushion for a pillow ;

Their mistress screaming as she bended o'er,
Her hair all flying like a storm-tossed willow.
They saw the face of neither at the first,
But soon a fearful sight upon them burst.

IV.

"The strong man writhed in awful agony;
But what a countenance — when his wife raised
Her own white, working features — did they see!
'Twas all convulsed, but they declared who gazed
That its chief horror was its yellow hue,
Purple with pain, like brimstone burning blue.

V.

"But oh! the anguish on Rosina's brow
Started and stood in many a ghastly bead.
'Twas plain, if this had been her doing, now
She would have given her life to undo the deed.
She screamed for aid — to aid himself, implored —
He who knew all things — tell her but a word!

VI.

"There seemed to come a momentary lull
In torture, and Francesco looked at her —
Half vacantly — his eyes were growing dull;
And then he drew her to him, and with stir
Rather than motion of the lips, he said
Some brief words, a command, which she obeyed.

VII.

"Obeyed, and with the speed of light — she rushed
Out of the door and up the stair — they heard
Her flying step — a moment, and, all flushed
And panting, she was kneeling by her lord.

Hope had transformed her. Like a ruddy spark,
She bore a little vial of garnet dark.

VIII.

“He took it from her, held it to his lips
And drained it. Then he whispered her once more,
‘Rosina, kiss me!’ Bright from her eclipse
Of woe, she leaned and kissed him o’er and o’er.
Sudden he threw her fiercely from his side,
Flung out his clenched hands, laughed loud—and died.

IX.

“There was suspicion, grave suspicion, and
The doctors came, and talked in learned tone:
The case was one they did not understand;
The death was sudden; but no poison known
Could be discovered; and the coroner,
With due formality, acquitted her.

X.

“Months passed—and, pale and restless as a ghost,
Rosina moved about her desolate hall.
Antonio came again—the coast clear—but at most
She seemed to endure him; when, amazing all
Who witnessed this, it was announced, the house
Would have another master, she a spouse.

XI.

“And they were wed.” Lucia paused, as those
Who in an hour-glass see the last sands ebb.
My story nears its climax and its close.
Had the fly ceased to struggle in the web?
Bloated with horror, doth the spider Fate
Prepare to spring, nor longer lie in wait?

XII.

Whate'er the inexplicable link there was
Between this second marriage and her doom,
Rosina seemed impelled without a cause.
- Let fair Lucia here the tale resume: —
“All thought it strange. Her passionate love of old
For young Antonio had grown more than cold.

XIII.

“At times it seemed aversion. All the same
She married him — and oh! that wedding night!
They say that she burned up in fire and flame!
They say that — Jesu! were I to recite
The third part of what rumor said and saith,
I would appall you with that fearful death.

XIV.

“Scarce was the rite performed, when, with a shriek,
She pressed her heart, said something seemed to
scorch her,
And in a moment was convulsed. A week
She lingered in unutterable torture;
While — all the world being witness, as it were —
Prompt aid was given, and skill, and patient care.

XV.

“In vain, for she was doomed. Intensified
And multiplied in her a thousand-fold
Were all the pangs whereof Francesco died, —
The parting agony into long hours rolled!
Such is the tale they tell — and that she grew
Livid as he, like brimstone burning blue.

XVI.

“Do I not frighten you? To the last her prayer
Was Water! water! 'Tis too horrible!

She, with her unborn babe, I pity her,
Poor thing! when on her sufferings they dwell.
Is it a sin to wonder if her crime
Had not some expiation even in time?

XVII.

"Surely, Signore, after this tale of terror,
You'll laugh no longer at the ghosts!" At once
I made a frank confession of my error,
And then I asked some questions. In response,
She told how, after all these sad affairs,
The property had passed to many heirs.

XVIII.

"The House we live in has Seven Landlords!"
"Heaven!

Why, one is usually *quantum suff*
For any tenant — but imagine Seven!
How the house holds together is enough
Of marvel in itself, without your story,
Told, pretty one, like an improvisatore."

XIX.

Diamonds and rubies, scattered far and wide,
Frittered their value. When they came to look
For those two splendors, moon-and-tiger-eyed,
One was a simple pebble of the brook;
The other, as consumed by its own flashes,
Left but its cabala-clasp and dust of ashes.

XX.

Had Eastern spells from water, air, and flame
Evoked the Genii in earth's secret rifts?
And now, then, did the elements reclaim
The essence of their talismanic gifts?

Not fairy presents only, with the loss
Of the sustaining principle, are but dross.

XXI.

But not on me that vanished talisman dual,
Which through the story flashed with bode and bale,
Wrought like the mystery-kernel of the jewel
Medicinal, which so strangely seemed to fail —
Or did it fail? — the vial Rosina brought.
It fascinated and fevered all my thought.

XXII.

The vulgar deemed it but an antidote,
That came too late; but, in that tiny thing,
I read a possibility, not remote,
Of motive beyond their imagining,
Of motive reaching to the loftiest height
Or lowest deep of moral day or night.

XXIII.

What if it held a potent subtilty
Of murder, slow but poisoning with a breath;
Of vengeance, which his heart's malignity
Suggested, in the article of death;
And, uttering venom like a viper's hiss,
He had betrayed and killed her with a kiss?

XXIV.

Or, moved to manliest magnanimity
By the girl's anguish, generously sublime,
Had tasked his wondrous skill — though he must die —
To neutralize all evidence of her crime;
And in his farewell kiss was pardon free,
To soften her remorseful agony?

XXV.

Men's souls have risen to this height in death,
Whose previous lives such loftiness belied,
In death, on grand occasions; and, beneath
The crucial test, whom crowds had deified
Have failed abjectly. Qualities innate,
Not chance, at such times, make men small or great.

XXVI.

Let Italy illustrate. He who gave
A Borgia's practice for a prince's guide,
Shone a true hero under trial — no slave
Less nobly than Savonarola died.
Florence writes Machiavel on Honor's roll:
Her monk-enthusiast had a craven soul.

XXVII.

Or what, attributing Rosina's end
To even-handed justice, if to the brewer
The poisoned chalice Heaven should thus commend,
And retribution, ever prompt and sure,
Smite — what then? Would the sum of wrong be less?
Perchance not — and perchance we are fools that guess.

XXVIII.

The violation of a natural law
Brings with it its immediate penalty.
But who abjures a darling vice through awe
Of consequence alone? We are made free
Of the ignoble by more generous strife
With powers of evil for the nobler life.

XXIX.

Ormuzd, converting Ahriman, shall endure.
But was Prometheus vanquished by his vulture?

If Sin be but defect, not principle, its cure,
Though partly penal, rests in higher culture.
To uproot the weed, to prune the plant, is Duty;
But something more assures the Rose of Beauty.

XXX.

My tale is done. Its page leaves margin-room
For charity, though the text be dark and sad.
Over it hangs immitigable doom;
But my worst villains have not been all bad.
Never, save to Omniscience, may appear
Humanity's dark riddles true and clear.

XXXI.

I read my story to a friend, and he,
With supercilious smile and sapient frown,
Said, "You have done it pretty well, but see
How very plain a tale might put you down.
Suppose that, without any crime whatever,
He died of apoplexy, she of fever, —

XXXII.

"Your Lara-Manfred, whose remote career
Distance made vague, and his young peasant-
bride, —
That village gossips talked — which is not queer —
And certain jewels were stolen when they died.
This is the whole thing, leaving out a lot
Of magic, murder, moonshine, and what not."

XXXIII.

"Shame on you!" I exclaimed with feeling lively,
"You pluck the very heart out of romance.
I have asserted nothing positively,
And left my characters just such a chance

As you have given them. In the old Greek plays
Murder was never done in public gaze.

XXXIV.

"How faithless Clytemnestra slew her lord,
The Æschylean chorus did rehearse
Sublimely; but the stab and reeking sword
Were hid behind the scenes. So modern verse
With indistinctness dexterously may veil
The too sharp horrors of a tragic tale."

XXXV.

Crime taints this atmosphere. On Capri dwelt
A monster. From yon loveliest crescent-reach,
Where the great names of Rome sublime the belt
Of clustered villas crowning Baia's beach,
Exhales a steam of matricidal blood,
Which taints the Elysian fields and stains the flood.

XXXVI.

The last boy-Cæsar in the purple born
Was clothed with empire ere with man's estate.
Perchance we should not mete out over-scorn
For what seemed Crime, and was but awful Fate.
Supreme, unbounded, irresponsible rule
Made of the youth a madman and a fool.

XXXVII.

Look at Tiberius' or Nero's face!
They were arch-tyrants of tyrannic Rome.
Yet neither lack in native power and grace;
And flowers, we know, were strewn on Nero's tomb.
Weak man! with the dominion of a god!
The demon laughs — and wields his puppet's rod!

XXXVIII.

In modern Baia, to a mandolin,
The tarantella 's danced in Dian's temple.
And ancient Baia piped to softer sin
Than crimes imperial. In her lewd example,
At flowered symposia and to bacchant brows,
Melted the virtue of the sternest spouse.

XXXIX.

Shade of the Roman mother! pardon me.
O chaste Cornelia! thou redeem'st the rest.
More than Minerva's in its panoply,
The Gracchi drew their virtues from thy breast.
Daughter of Scipio! let us not forget
Here was thy pure home, here its ruins yet.

XL.

And poor Pompeii — pious men maintain —
Deserved her fearful overwhelming Hour;
Her prototypes the Cities of the Plain —
The sin — the wrath provoked — the fiery shower.
Sooth, though the wall-nymphs charm us with their
glamours,
The Romans were not delicate in their amours.

XLI.

Clash Corybantic cymbals! Float along
Your arabesques! for we would dream awhile.
Dried are the fountains — wake, O Dance and Song!
Yours is the only life that seems to smile,
In this, the silent City of the Dead,
Save the sea sparkling through the colonnade.

CASTLE CAMPBELL.

O CASTLE GLOOM ! thy dark defile
Throgs not with Scottish story ;
On other towers, O proud Argyle !
Sits crowned thine ancient glory.
But little have we of the past,
As up the dell we ramble,
To figure, floating on the blast,
Thy banners, Castle Campbell !

And all we have is all of gloom,
Though — dear to many a true heart —
Here, in her levity and bloom,
Came lovely Mary Stuart.
A joy in joy, a Godmother
Of Fairie to a bridal —
And in the outer gloom for her
The shadow regicidal !

Lo ! here again, with blare of trump
In a brave summons sounding,
A Vision of fine grace and pomp !
A Queen in war's surrounding !
Away ! Dark sockets in yon vault,
Face-carven, glower upon her ;
Grimacing mirth, more torturing fault,
They threaten throne and honor !

Here dauntless Knox his doctrines taught,
Stern as the scaur and boulder,

Straight as his Titan's pathway cut
Axe-keen in the crag's shoulder.
Here great Montrose's army came,
At last, revenging rarely,
In a red reek of wrathful flame,
The "bonny House of Airlie!"

From far lang syne — the legend goes —
A pining prisoned maiden
With the sad burden of her woes
This lonely glen hath laden.
Name to this sombre pile she gave
With her own heart in color;
Bade Care and Sorrow round it rave,
And blend in gulfs of Dolor.

And by this lift that hangs so low,
By water-wraiths unruly,
By weeping shaw, by warlock knowe,
Her grief seems answered truly.
Not less by thee, enswathed in cloud,
While all around lies crumbled,
O Donjon-keep, that rearest proud
Thy battlements unhumbled!

Yet Gloom hath never yet possessed
One spot in Nature wholly;
A skylark in each sunny breast
Lilts out at melancholy.
Oh! loud the linn hath merry din
In tune with voices merry;
The snowy foam lights up the glen
With joy, when hearts are cheery.

'Tis lovely here; though skies are mirk,
And all the Ochils darkle:
See! light sprays of the silver birk
Dip where the waters sparkle!
'Tis lovely; though no prince of song
Sweet praises here bestoweth,
Sweetest if his, whose name along
The brooks of Scotland floweth.

Weird Watch-tower by the Cataracts!
Thou fling'st not o'er the Atlantic
A glamour, that to thee attracts
Young Fancy the romantic.
He hears the rune of Hawthornden,
Ere there his footsteps wander,
He knows by heart the Trossach's glen,
Nor dreams that thine is grander.

Nature by sympathy divine
May sometimes soothe our sorrow;
But always it is thine and mine
Her energies to borrow.
Greenly abune these mouldering oaks
The fresh young copse is springing,
And richly to the misty rocks
Are moss and lichen clinging.

In vain impends yon Windy Edge
With blackest precipices;
A glory, to this dizzy bridge,
Glints white from its abysses.
In vain less awful cliffs would frown
For ferns and flowery tresses,

While yellowing lime and light ash crown
Such strenuous wildernesses.

Flow on, with all your waterfalls,
By crag and castle riven,
Ye streams, that fantasy miscalls,
To the "clear winding Devon!"
My heart from you the lesson learns,
In gloom to sing right onward;
And, like your braes, ye bonny burns,
To grow in bravery sunward!



EMPEDOCLES.

HA! torches! a loud voice, "Empedocles!"
These are my servants, whom I bade bring hither,
At early moonrise, my sure-footed mule,
That unattended I might mount by night
Great Etna, to my star-observatory.

The guests have long withdrawn: at my desire
They left me here alone with the bruised flowers,
Spilled wines, and all stale odors of the food,
To dream — my nostrils filled with this vile steam —
Ambrosial dreams: they take me for a god.
Will they not know me for a god when they,
To-morrow morn, shall seek and find me not,
Nor here, nor there, nor anywhere on earth?
For so have I ordained — even I — a god!
It may be some one, starting in his sleep,
May hear this voice, "Empedocles," and see,

Or fancy that he sees, a light from heaven,
And say hereafter, "The gods called him hence,
His comrades, from this banquet to their feasts
Immortal, far removed from reach of fate,
Or any touch of wan and wasting age."

O friends, who in the white-faned city dwell,
Where yellow Acragas and Hypsus flow,
By harbors that the strangers love, intent
On honorable, hospitable cares,
Have ye not seen my purple garments trailed,
Have ye not heard my golden sandals ring
Upon the marble in your colonnades;
When I have walked benignant over all,
In roses garlanded, with laurel crowned,
To serve at altars innocent of blood,
With pious censers, myrrh and frankincense,
And with the brown Hyblæan honey poured;
I, warder off of winds and pestilence,
Physician, prophet, priest, and poet, versed —
Through clear-eyed fasts and prayer and solemn rites,
Through study of Nature's dark or luminous page,
And by high favor of the lustral god —
In pure religion, magic, medicine, song,
And music; mine, the melting strains that stay
The murderer with the hell-glare on his blade;
Mine, chants of mystical ascendancy,
Orphean chants, whereby the dead are raised,
Or adamantine lips of Fate unlocked?
Have ye not known me scorn the monarch's crown
When tendered me, being greater than a king,
And battle with my peers, the aristocrats,

For liberal laws and rights of common men,
Being, like a god, large in beneficence?
O men and women of Trinacria,
In your proud, prosperous cities, have ye not
Accorded me the reverence that was due
To more than man, to an immortal god?

I go. Do I delude them? cheat myself?
I would they should believe for their own good.
Who hath not felt, at moments, as when swords
Of quick-drawn lightning stab the darkness through,
A keen, hot glimpse into his inmost self,
And a dismaying bewilderment withal,
That he is something other than he seems,
And vaster than his hedge of circumstance?
A sense as of a lordly eagle caged,
Though but a vulgar bird to vulgar eyes?
A sense of wrong in anything withheld?
A consciousness of claims on the Infinite,
That he by right should scale the very highest,
An heir of the empyrean?

What is Death?

To dreamers, when the soul from sense is free,
The dead are as the living.

These are truths

Intuitive. The ethereal part of man,
By ancient ordinance of the high gods
Oath-clinched, inherits length of years divine;
But should he stain his limbs of light with blood
(O Heaven! why tasted I the accursed food?
From what immeasurable glory I fell!)
He must go wandering thrice ten thousand years

From bliss supernal, pass from birth to birth
Of unreprieve, exhausting form and phase;
As I, the toy of mutability,
Though now a god on earth before my time.
Loathed of the elements are mortal lives:
Air in its anger drives them to the sea;
The fierce sea foams them forth upon the land;
The land abhorrent flings them to the flames
Of Helios; thence hurled back in huge disdain
Into the homeless wilds of rolling air.

For I, ere this Empedocles, have been
A girl, a boy, a bush, a bird, a fish;
Have thrilled with love, flowers, wings, and silent fins.

Lo! what a brilliant shooting-star! It bursts
In flakes of emerald and vermilion fire;
Another and another! flashing forth
All colors, orange, white, red, green, and blue;
And now mere needle points, with threads of light.
These are the Daemons — souls — that fall from grace,
As they have fallen since time began; and one
Differs in glory from another. Some,
The nobler natures — laurels among trees
And lions among beasts — maintain their rank,
Till recognized at last as bards and kings;
Then husks of earth consume, and spirit soars.

The road winds upward through the forest zone
Of Etna. Giant chestnuts! hoary oaks!
What mighty minds are prisoned in your bark,
In girth of near a score of centuries!

But, Titans of the sylvan wilderness,
Wearing furred moonlight on your shoulders vast,
That which is now Empedocles is ringed
In more sublimity of years than ye!

The forests are behind me. Terrible
And awful the ridged lava stretches on.
What a black solitude! how white the moon!
O discords of this overvaulted cave,
How ye remind me of a doleful time!
Then when I cried aloud, and wept forlorn,
An exile landed on a foreign shore —
A hideous shore, where evil destinies
Trooped, and Corruption was the lord of all.
Through Ate's meadow they went, lost in gloom.
There was the queen of darkness; over her,
With far-inquiring eyes, the starry heaven.
And there were murderous strife and mild-eyed peace,
Beauty and all unsightliness, and — frank
As yon moon, nude and noble — lovely truth,
And insincerity with darkling brows;
And birth and death — miscalled so — wake and sleep,
Motion and immobility, were there;
Crowned majesty and squalid misery,
Unmeaning clamor and the voice of gods.

Now must I climb on foot. Return to earth,
My mule; thou hast no voice to speak of me.
O patient beast, my brother, fare thee well!

And now upon my tall watch-tower I stand,
At the top crater's lip. Calmly I look

Into the red-hot, groaning, boiling bowl,
And calmly I inhale the sulphurous fumes
That soon shall suffocate this mortal breath.
I turn to Nature for a farewell glance.
From yon horizon, which this lofty peak
Hath lifted heavenward like a bank of cloud,
The morning star arises. — Beautiful
Art thou, O Phosphor, moon among the stars,
And star compared with yonder westerling moon!
Gray ocean rings itself blue-black against
The pale green dawn; now eastern clouds reveal
The rosy-fingered Eos; now they melt
All golden in the golden-thronéd sun;
The presence of the great sea grows divine,
Wine-dark and wrinkled as with laughter. — Lo!
The Day is born; but only born for me!
Trinacria sleeps beneath me, still in night,
Italia far off, and the Æolian isles.
They wake; the vapors kindle; to the west
I see another Etna, crowned with smoke,
Cities and forests on its sides — the shadow
Of the proud mountain on the purple mists,
And breadths of populous island flushing through!
'Tis gone: the vision hath no more a place,
And soon no place have I in common day.

Ye Elements, created when the Sphere
Was poised, rejoicing in a perfect rest,
When Strife retired, and Love was lord of all!
O four prime roots of every thing that is —
A secret I alone have learned and taught!
O radiant Zeus, and Herè, mother of breath,

And Aidoneus, and Nais with her tears!
Light, air, and land and sea, farewell! farewell!
To thee, Hephæstus, essence of the light,
And yet most fearful, unto thee, O Fire!
I give these limbs. Do with them what thou wilt.
One leap — Why do I shrink? Not from the pain,
Fierce, cruel, momentary; but I dread
To be dissolved into the amorphous mass
Of chaos — at annihilation quail.
Cheer up, Empedocles! And though thus fallen,
Thou 'st learned, perchance, but what man's wisdom
may,

Believe that plastic Love informs thee, yea,
Deride the false idea of death and birth.
The germ of Being may take many shapes,
But Cronos, nor Poseidon, nor yet Zeus —
Time, nor the Sea, nor Thunder — nay, nor Hell,
Can kill what Aphrodite hath made man.
O teach me, maiden of the milk-white arms,
Mnemosyne, the things that I should know!
Come from the House of Holiness, even now,
And bring her harnessed car! Ah! wherefore play
With names and symbols?

Thou Eternal One!

Supreme God! with no human head, nor feet,
Nor branching arms, nor other parts of man,
Who, holy Harmony, unshadowed Mind,
Passionless, unapproachable, unseen,
Dartest with swift thought through the limitless,
I trust in thee alone — in thee I live,
And in thine everlasting ordinance,
Which the vast spaces of the worlds obey.

Truth here is but belief — we cannot know.
To fire this frame, and to the All-Wise this mind,
I freely give — to be a god on high,
Or whatsoever Omnipotence may please —
And having left behind no trace on earth,
This much make sure: through all the future years,
My name and reputation as a god!

*He spake and plunged. The great volcano groaned,
Engulfed him, and, with one terrific throe,
Cast up his sandals on the crater's edge.*

THE VOYAGE OF ST. BRANDAN.

IN story, centuries old, I read
That Eden, in its rainless bloom,
The flood swept off, and islanded
Until the day of doom.
Its shadowy hints the twilight please,
And mariners on moonless seas
Scent strange, sweet odors on the breeze —
They pass it in the gloom.
And once a monk of Innisfail,
With youthful, yearning eyes
Beheld no more of men, set sail
In quest of Paradise.

The legend haunted me: in sleep
I saw the high-pooped galliot, trim
In sail and ballast for the deep,
Depart at dawning dim.

In fire and foam sank Erin's isle,
As in the rising sun the while
A sweet youth with a heavenly smile
On a gold harp did hymn.
"And what, O youth, on deck so quaint,
Seek those seraphic eyes?
What speaks thy harp?" "Hope!" sang the saint:
"I sail for Paradise."

My vision changed: 'twas noon: the sea
In glaring calm one vessel glassed;
In leaden immobility
The worn sails draped the mast.
The voyager, in manly prime,
I knew; and still that song sublime
I heard, defying tide and time,
Although the morn was past.
"O minstrel, what, when hope seems dead,
Yet holds thine earnest eyes?
What now art hymning?" "Faith!" he said,
"And the isle of Paradise."

I dreamed through shocks of storm and gale:
Again I saw: the day was done;
That bark, a wreck with ragged sail,
Steered for the setting sun.
But, ah! I had not known, in sooth,
Save for those eyes of radiant truth
And that rich harp, that the sweet youth
And gray-haired sage were one.
"And what, O seer, at close of even,
Enraptures still thine eyes?"

What music?" "Love, and yon pure heaven,
The shore of Paradise."

Lo! in smooth sweep of gleaming swell,
The jasper sea! A mighty land,
With many a purple peak and dell,
Soared from the waters grand.
With great woods waved on every slope,
An isle distinct from base to cope;
And over all, in face of hope,
Flashed no repelling brand.
Too soon I lost that glorious sky,
That bark, those solemn eyes;
But my night was filled with harmony
That breathed of Paradise.

Let no heart faint in the slow course
Of effort, if it would achieve;
There lives indomitable force
In simply — to believe.
Hope tunes thy harp, boy-poet pure;
Teach faith with all thy might mature;
Sing heavenly love — its promise sure
To give and to receive;
The purest good, the loftiest goal,
Seek with undrooping eyes,
And life's long day, O dauntless soul,
Shall set on Paradise.

ANCESTRAL WORSHIP.

PARAPHRASED IN PART FROM CHINESE "PRAYERS AT
THE TOMB."

I.

THE Dragon winds it in his coils,
The Dragon's pulse on the landscape rests;
The Pearl River flows by the Flowery Isles,
Where gather the egrets with graceful crests;
From terraced rice-fields fall the rills,
On the beautiful slopes of a thousand hills;
Temples and tall pagodas grace
The banks, and many a burial-place
Like this, where, musical in the firs,
Moan the souls of our ancestors.

We pray that prosperous we may be,
Like the melon-creeper and cotton-tree;
Hear us, a grateful posterity,
Enrich us and bless us abundantly!

II.

We come in our Dragon boats, with songs
By the way, and music, and clash of gongs;
Our prows are the jaws of dragons, their tails
Enwrap the rowers in glittering scales;
We light the red lanterns, and over the stern
The silver papers we burn and burn.
Lo! sacrificial those papers rise,
Smoking and fluttering toward the skies;
The dews of the spring begin to fall:
The form to the grave, the soul to the hall!

The rivers and forests have genitors: we
Gratefully honor our ancestry.
When the fount is high the stream flows free;
When the roots strike deep, how tall the tree!

III.

Here where the Terminalia tread,
Those Genii of the hills, we meet;
Hither we come, to cheer the dead,
Bringing sweet viands and garlands sweet;
We sit in the circle — the ante-room
Of audience, fronting each hillside tomb;
And, burning the while our golden prayers
With incense warm of the sandal-wood,
Descend from the pure, ethereal airs,
Each spirit ancestral, great and good!
Like the butterfly to the flowery lea,
Stoop where our fragrant offerings be;
Bless, each one, your posterity
With riches and honor abundantly!

IV.

When the sacred Dragon mounts the storm,
Ancestral guardians! with him ye soar;
Visions and voices the clouds inform
With wrath, rebellion, and woe, and war.
By the terrible banners, that blast the sight
Of the impious foe with their hallowed light,
By the battle-gong's tremendous charm,
Be our fathers and mothers safe from harm!
To the land that we love the young men give—
Let the saplings fall that the Oak may live!

But we pray, by our filial piety,
While the river runneth tranquilly,
That our lives may flow to the ultimate sea
In continual peace and prosperity!

MOUNT VERNON.

I.

BLOW as ye will, ye winds, or loud or lowly!
Flow, thou Potomac, murmuring or in roar!
The storm may make the scene no less than holy,
And reverend trance of river-calm no more,
With lips of lapsing waves to kiss the shore.
Green, ever green be, flourish high or fade,
Fade in a night, ye cedars hale or hoar!
Be outward things in glow or gloom arrayed,
Little the pilgrim heeds, Mount Vernon, in thy shade!

II.

Day and night seasons, clouds of evanescence,
Are not the Heaven we name them in the sky;
'Tis we that shadow there sublimer presence;
So spots of common earth about us lie,
Shrines that the Immortal seem to sanctify,
Because we love them and revere. The sun
Shines on no haunted ground. But makes reply,
Serenely syllabled, this silent stone:
Be all things sacred here! Here rests George Wash-
ington!

III.

And this, then, is Mount Vernon! and I view,
Beyond this wide reach of Potomac's flood,

Maryland and Virginia, in the blue
Of distance, blending in sweet sisterhood.
As close, as sisterly, as lovely, should
Your real Union be, his children-States.
Oh! by your freedom, in him unwithstood,
From the orient sea to sunset's golden gates,
Clasp every link of love which here he consecrates!

IV.

Oh! first in war, and first in peace, and first
In the affections of thy countrymen!
If yawned this marble, if thy cerements burst,
And showed thee in thy mortal garb again,
Would madmen better heed thy teachings then
Than now, when all the sanctity is given
Wherewith Death crowneth lives the purest, when
Thy glory pinnacles itself in Heaven?
Vain, if they heed not now, thy resurrection even!

V.

Lo! on that shadowy shore, sublime with mountains
Whence beauteous bringers of glad tidings come,
Where Hope, the heavenly Naiad, feeds her foun-
tains,
There, in the Eternal, is thy shining home.
Yet, Washington, we worship at thy tomb,
Cold though the marble, cold thine ashes here.
In all our sad perplexity and gloom,
May patriot hearts, from passion freed and fear,
Grow noble in the calm of memories they revere.

FAITH MILITANT.

DEVOUT and simple-hearted men
Were Christendom's old knightly band:
Whose lion hearts, in Holy Land,
With Tyrian purple dyed the sand,
In crusade on the Saracen;

Who, in prolonged Hispanian war,
For Heaven all-whiles with supple knees,
Had fronts of steel for enemies,
Slow-conquering from the Pyrenees
To the sea-tower of Gibal-Tar;

Who rode triumphant in Don John's
War-galleys on Lepanto's swell;
Or who, in ranks of Charles Martel,
Made havoc of the Infidel,
With a great host of crescent moons; .

Or on the New World's virgin soil, —
In all that cruel warfare waged,
Hot conquest by no mercy 'suaged, —
Whose lust of gold and glory raged,
Most hungering when most gorged with spoil:

Though deeds were done their daring scope
Romantic not alone could gloss;
Yet, in all fates, in gain or loss,
Their eyes were ever on the Cross,
In singleness of heart and hope.

Castile and Leon, lo! they yield;
Stout Cortez flies: Is it, indeed,
Saint Iago, on his snow-white steed,
Or their own glowing faith, at need,
Which turns the fortunes of the field?

What though, unlearned as his horse,
The knight all clerkly skill despised;
How earth was round in vain surmised;
And at the stake had exorcised
The sorceries of Daguerre and Morse

And Fulton: ye may learn from him,
O men of a mechanic age!
Ye read the sky's illumined page,
And the dark hills; the ocean gauge,
Whereon your iron castles swim;

Ye make the sun paint, lightnings speak,
Nor line nor language is occult;
Miles off ye plant the catapult,
And o'er the battered fort exult:—
And yet, O wise men! ye are weak!

Oh for the old implicit faith
In anything not greatly false!
The analytic brain, which halts
At acquiescence, ne'er exalts
The soul to noble life or death.

Believe: let peace or war betide,
Life is one constant battle-field:

Put on the Spirit's sword and shield:
The victor-clarion shall be pealed,
When the saints combat by your side!

In God, my bleeding country, trust!
Though sad the consanguineous flow
Where "Greek meets Greek," where every blow
Strikes at a brother in a foe, —
Let us join battle for the just!

Have faith: from every patriot's grave,
If thence, in truth, no champions start,
The voices of the past impart
Purpose and prescience to each heart,
Which sees the end, is strong to save!

As plainly the great Genoese,
While Hope lived on through years of night,
The New World saw by inward light,
As when, in morning glory bright,
It blossomed on Bahama's seas!



THE "CUMBERLAND."

PROUDLY rode the "Cumberland" at anchor,
Into Hampton Roads where flows the James;
Proudly from the peak of the furl'd spanker,
Floating in the light, her ensign flames.
Not from trailing staff, —
At the lofty gaff,
Starry franchise of the sky it claims.

And her wooden walls were such as Nelson
Vanquished with at Nile and Trafalgar;
Strong her bulwarks, live-oak ribs and keelson,
Each topgallant pine, each rope and spar;
Strong and beautiful
Her embattled hull,
Clothed in thunder, terrible in war.

Seamen swore by her — herself a glory,
Their devotion glorified her more.
Like the great roc in Arabian story,
Wont on overshadowing wings to soar;
When the breeze was brave,
Steam, the galley-slave,
Lagged behind her, tugging at his oar.

Quiet on the shore and stream: sedately
Watched the sentinel at Newport News
Forts and tented fields, the frigates stately,
Silent with their armaments and crews;
Norfolk's harbor-mouth
Hazy to the south;
Slumberous distances and shimmering views.

Wake, O camps and ships! What shape encroaches
On yon river reach, a shadow black?
Grows the slime new Saurians? It approaches —
Ho! she comes! the mailed "Merrimac!"
Bold, with batteries manned,
Waits the "Cumberland!"
Speeds the Invulnerable to the attack!

Waits a gallant crew the word to fire,
In that feverish pause their souls aflame.
Undegenerate — from a hero-sire
And the saint of chivalry his name —
Doth their young chief quail?
Shall the Dragon's scale
Scare the good knight, consecrate to Fame?

Steadily came the foe; from forts and vessels
Spurt the red fire and the spectral wreath;
Steadily on — for in that storm of missiles
Hurtful only was the monster's breath —
Till, with a great shock,
Deep through sides of oak
Drove her iron beak, in the clench of Death!

As from ringing roofs the hail-stones rounded,
As from fabulous seals the lightnings hot,
So the "Cumberland's" broadsides rebounded
From the adamantine foe she fought;
Idly, on that roof,
As an anvil proof,
Beat the thunder-hammers of the shot.

Was it idly? No! though, quickly sinking,
Boomed your last gun level with the tide;
No! though to the last with hearts unshrinking
Ye by hundreds perished in your pride;
With your flag unlowered,
Conquering while o'erpowered,
Not in vain ye fought, nor vainly died!

“Thou who passest, tell to Lacedæmon
We obeyed her laws, and here are we.”
Yours as proud an epitaph, O Seamen,
As those martyrs of Thermopylæ!
Written, all in light,
On that banner bright,
Which illumes your altar-tomb, the sea!

And, O grateful land! in measure ample
Thank the living, give the lost your tears;
Thou, invincible in their example, —
Laughing Death in the face with merry cheers,
Dauntless in despair, —
And their flag left there
Beacons Valor to victorious years!



THE ADMIRAL.

WHEN the gallant old Sailor was lashed in the
shrouds,
Overlooking his battle-deck's sulphurous clouds,
As the bay of Mobile curled with phantoms of death,
And the iron-clad sank with the hell-bolt beneath,
He heard a voice — “Forward!”

In pomp and bold purpose as grandly he passed,
No banner of bunting is nailed to the mast.
True, the flag of his country flings splendors in air,
But its living, invincible heart, too, is there,
Aloft, going forward.

"By this sign I conquer!" was Constantine's cry,
As the cruciform miracle flamed in the sky.
"To our aid, Santiago!" Spain's knighthood implores —
On the field of Clavijo are scattered the Moors,
As the White Horse leads forward.

Was the Cross to the imperial convert revealed?
Did chivalry's saint drive the Crescent afield?
From the clear sky above was it Heaven that spoke,
Or the ghosts of dead heroes that called from the smoke,
As Farragut went forward?

Who shall measure for great hearts, in greatness of time,
These visions of glory and voices sublime?
Illumined by duty, unclouded by fear,
In the Admiral's soul, as it seemed to his ear,
A Divine voice said, "Forward!"

The battle of life he has fought to the close:
"Well done, faithful servant!" has crowned his repose.
But in that proud ensample, to us and to all,
Lives the lesson of courage, the high duty-call;
God's commandment bids — Forward!

THE DEATH OF WALLENSTEIN.

SENI, THE ASTROLOGER, LOQUITUR.

SO low thou liest, Duke Friedland! that so high
Hast borne thy crest it brooked no master's frown,
And flown thy falcon, till, in Glory's sky,
The Imperial Eagle it had nigh struck down!
So still thou liest, that swept with sword and flame,
In hurricanes of war, o'er Germany!
Too mighty for a subject! now how tame
At footstool of an awfuller majesty!
O Wallenstein! O Wallenstein!
My pupil and my prince! how sad a heart is mine!

Why marches Doom with omens vain? Ah, well!
As into Egra yester-eve we rode,
The cloud-rack rolled above the citadel,
Big with the thunder — the red glare of bode
Burned in the west, and withered leaves flew round;
Then charnel smells struck chill upon the blast,
And two grave-diggers louted to the ground
And leered askance at Butler, as we passed.
Still, Wallenstein! still, Wallenstein!
I saw those dreadful eyes, the slow grave smile in thine.

Deep in the night I watched the clouds and stars.
Through all affronted all the star of strife;
Auspicious on the field of battle, Mars
Was thy malevolence in the house of life.
Then Jupiter, thy planet, crimsoned set.
The Signs stood full of horror. Theirs and mine

Were futile warnings — Fate had cast the net —
And thou wert deaf and doomed, O Wallenstein!
Yea, Wallenstein! yea, Wallenstein!
Lord of the ascendant rode a lurid Fiend malign.

The sands in yonder hour-glass have run down;
Down to their sockets have those candles burned;
Ah! Fortune from her tiptoe perch has flown,
And on its stand the globe is overturned.
All eloquent of life forever gone,
Of greatness fallen from splendor and command;
And here the whole dark inference is drawn:
This broken bell-rope near thy nerveless hand.
Ah, Wallenstein! ah, Wallenstein!
Why brood on these, when there lies murdered Might
supine?

Yet still what seems a trifle fascinates:
Upon thy finger there, the diamond ring!
What secret beam enkindles, animates?
For, lo! it flashes like a living thing.
The glimmering dawn is slowly creeping in,
It calls no light from thy lack-lustre eye,
Yet something from afar — or from within —
Makes the stone flame like Venus in the sky.
Lo, Wallenstein! lo, Wallenstein!
Thy star was lord of Heaven, 'tis monarch of the Mine.

Burn on, O diamond! Burn thou into me
The lesson of the light within the stone!
In this world's glory and mutability
The gem is undecayable alone.

Man changes — his heart changes — not his soul!
And all compact at birth as death it shines;
For it good planets sympathetic roll.
And the Red Evil battles in the Signs.
O Wallenstein! O Wallenstein!
Is thine the fire of hell, or is it light divine?

A LAY SERMON.

A STORMY sunset floats sublime
On wings of thunder-cloud, that mime
The dragons of chaotic slime.

Borne on these phantoms of the prime,
Thought floats far up the stream of time,
Back to the source it cannot climb.

Through silent growth and thunder-spasm,
Evolving life from protoplasm:
The unthinkable beyond — a chasm!

A chasm between us and the Height,
Between the darkness and the light,
The finite and the infinite!

Through such grand cycles, change so vast,
That human progress stands aghast;
And God unreachable at last!

Thus Science soars; or, inch by inch,
Welds fact to fact some truth to clinch;
And from the Spiritual doth flinch.

Imprisoned in our ignorance,
Let the soul introvert its glance!
We feel that nothing comes of chance.

Doth the dice-thrower look askance?
'Tis man's will, not the ivory dance,
Is lord or slave of circumstance.

We feel that consciousness is born
But of the conscious: unforlorn,
This faith is fearless of all scorn.

We feel — though Nature blindly move —
Our hearts the paradox may prove
Of law and miracle in Love.

Our systems shift like shapes of cloud
That yon great luminary shroud;
The fire burns out that made them proud:

Yet is the still small Voice adored:
'Tis Virtue proves that God is Lord, —
A revelation and reward.

For, be our ideal great or small,
If from self-reverence we fall,
Conscience makes cowards of us all;

But whoso royally bears upright
Each inch of his own standard height,
May face an Universe of light.

And no man, rightly understood,
Is complex of the bad and good:
'Tis effort marks the brotherhood.

Where none are strong, and none are wise,
He is the best his best that tries, —
Is one with Christ in paradise!

Of dogmas dark take no account;
Let Nature hide her parent fount;
We have the Sermon on the Mount.

In worlds or worms, in cloud or clod,
Design escapes our sounding-rod:
Yet shall the pure in heart see God!



THE VALLEY OF THE YUMURI.

ISLAND OF CUBA.

I.

WHEN the dull gray mists of the morning
Hung over the land and sea,
We rode to the heights o'erlooking
The Vale of the Yumuri;
Thither we rode and waited
Till the sun, like an Angel of Light,
Touched with transfiguring glory
The vaporous ghost of night;
While over the sea behind us
The clouds yet darkly lie,
They are silvery on the hill-sides,
They are crimsoned up in the sky;
And with noiseless smoke-surf drifting
And breaking on palmy knolls,

With its great drop-curtain lifting,
The tropical scene outrolls!
In the lap of the verdant mountains,
In many a mural chain,
Here ripens the golden orange,
Here sweetens the sugar-cane;
Not fairer the Ilappy Valley
Of the Abyssinian tale;
And the giant Pan of Matanzas
Is monarch of the vale.
With glistening eyes, as of childhood,
O'er the summer hills I glance,
With eyes that the unfamiliar
Enchants with the hues of romance.
Oh, I stood there, as Youth stands ever,
With the morning light on the earth,
Yet near the veiled ocean, shadowing
The mystery of Birth.

II.

We rode through the valley at evening:
A golden sunset burned,
And against it the piny summits
Were black, as we returned;
The mountain shadows lengthened,
The sun went down behind,
And in streamers of rosy color
Grew the twilight arch defined.
With luminous interspaces
Of that glory in the west,
The feathering palm-trees tapered
Up from each hillock's crest;

Than columns of human temples
More tall and graceful far;
Their broad leaves faintly silvered
By the rays of the evening star.
It was beautiful as a vision!
But we passed a gap in the hills,
By a river — and lo! the ocean
The vast horizon fills!
No more as it was at morning,
Wrapped in a misty cloud,
It stretched to the north in its grandeur,
With the gathering night its shroud!
And I thought of the valley's legend,
Of the chief in battle slain,
Whose soul went forth as thy winds go,
Thou melancholy main!
Oh, often in pleasant places
Our lines of life may be,
But Joy casts a shadow — and round us
Forever flows the sea!



BERMUDA.

O H, let it rest, that midnight cloud
Of storm, made white with canvas rent;
The sea on fire with foam, as bowed
Our great ship's groaning armament;
Like Ajax battling in the gloom,
The tall masts writhed in fearful strain;
To thee of these no glimpse should come,
No horror of that hurricane.

Oh, staunch is still her heart of oak,
Brave bark! the tempest has gone by;
And we secure in "a deep nook"
Of the late "vexed Bermoothes" lie.
Is this the very isle, the spot
By Shakspeare made enchanted land?
Ah, yes! by Prospero's sparry grot,
Here wander I — Prince Ferdinand!

Enchantment all; with silent feet,
In shade of oleander groves,
By myrtle blooms, herself as sweet,
A vision of Miranda moves;
The fair young Princess of the Isle —
A dream — a phantom — dear to me;
For gliding grace, and blush, and smile,
Are but my memory of thee.

"Sweet spirit! whose imprisoned moan
Was music in the 'cloven pine,' —
Hast thou not heard, in woodlands lone,
Such melancholy voice divine? —
Whose tricksy spells, in the free air,
With things that 'suffer a sea change,'
To measured strains wrought pageants rare,
Till these wild reefs grew 'rich and strange;'

"Thy wont on such a night as this.
What moonlit bays! what lustre fills
These creeks, that hide their brimming bliss
In cedarn cover of the hills!
O delicate Ariel! thou, to whom
Gross were the loveliest myths of Greece,

From coral bower or mangrove gloom,
Come, charming more this midnight peace!

“Who, framed of finer elements
Than live in either human sex,
Hast yet a sympathetic sense,
True love to aid, the false to vex, —
Come thou to me! On ocean's floor
The magic wand sank ages since;
But I would speak the spell once more,
Which gave the lady to the Prince.

“I'll mount thee on yon snowy drift
Of cloud, and where my love may be
The soft south wind shall bear thee swift;
There weep in gentle rain for me.
Perchance in slumbers pure she lies,
Like angels, if they slumber, seem:
Steal the sweet smile from her closed eyes,
Oh, bring to me her happiest dream!”

Thus I invoke: the surf-lipped beach
And breezy hills breathe low reply —
What shape, from yonder glistening reach,
Dims with great light the silvered sky?
’Tis fancy all — I can but sigh,
O lady dear! and still dream on,
Of Ariel songs, and charms whereby
“Admired Mirandas” may be won!

IN MEMORIAM

OF THE U. S. SURVEYING BRIG PORPOISE, BELIEVED TO HAVE
PERISHED IN THE CHINA SEA, OCTOBER, 1864.

WHEN the Typhoon thundered,
And the ocean roared,
Then, do we deem, she foundered,
With all on board;
But not a floating plank
Shows where the ill-starred Porpoise sank,
And all her buoyant hearts the stifling waters drank.

To our earnest calling
Not a word will come
From that vague Doom, more appalling
In being dumb!
A Shadow dumb and veiled!
A thousand ships go by unhailed;
They see no phantom brig, they hear no death-cry
wailed.

Yet so wild a terror
Can the winds let die?
Glooms it in Ocean's mirror,
As a dream on the eye
May live in lurid woe?
In shade or shine, blow high, blow low,
The sea hath no new feeling—for the dead below!

The blue deeps impart not
Of the secret dark:

We know thou wert, and art not,
O gallant bark!

We know no more than this:
And out into the wide abyss
Grove with our vacant arms for something that we
miss.

Something near, familiar,
To our hearts as friends;
For something, too, auxiliar
To noble ends:
The lurking shoal to brave,
The bold, loud reef in shattering wave,
To fix Charybdis' form, from Scylla's jaws to save.

This was theirs, 'tis ours —
Each imperilled coast
To trace, from tropic bowers
To Arctic frost;
The haven to secure,
To span wild waves with highways sure —
Oh, fallen on such a field, shall not their fame endure?

Ye Tritons, for your Nelsons
Let the fierce conchs sleep!
Quake no more the war-keelsons
At the cannon's leap!
Lo! peaceful navies cruise,
Conquering where true Glory woos;
And the world smiles — or weeps: it wept for La
Perouse.

But the world's sorrow,
It has yet no cheer

For Love, that wakes each morrow
In a wild, wild fear,
And hope more wild and drear —
Sweet were the quiet of despair!
Comfort, O chastening God! Thy peace is pledged
to prayer!

THE SEA IS MELANCHOLY.

THE sea is melancholy,
And the winds wail, or they sigh,
Mournful wholly, mournful solely,
Homeless in the sky:
Oh, the sea is sad and lone!
And its myriad voices moan,
Hearts are cold and Hope is none,
Where we lie.

Floridas and fields of Sharon,
All the Spicy Islands blow;
But the summer sea is barren
As the winter snow:
There no dew falls; morn and even,
The great Twilight Rose in Heaven
Spreads, without a perfume given,
Empty show.

The inland dells are pleasant,
Many a bird pipes Valentine,
While the spring's first moon in crescent
Fills with joy divine.

Ah! sweet love sang like a bird
Till the deeps of bliss were stirred;
But that song is never heard
On the brine.

Hope, a gorgeous passion-flower —
Oh, the sea is cold and gray! —
Loses color every hour,
Why 'twere vain to say.
Let the wild storm-petrel cry,
Let the scentless weed drift by:
Is it salt tears in mine eye,
Or the spray?

THE BUCCANEER.

THERE hung a lurid sunset in the skies:
The lady she went forth alone;
Bold, yet she trembled, as light gusts would rise
And fall with a faint moan.

With sails loosed, at her shortest cable-scope,
A ship rode in a rocky bight;
And, like a bleak breast barren of all hope,
The shore stretched left and right.

A boat lay on the shingle; and thereby
A solitary form did pace
Restlessly: there was that in his wild eye
Which suited well the place.

He muttered, "Will she come?" The impatient
oath,

All native to his lip, at this,
As to a rank soil the foul fungus-growth,
Was silenced by a kiss.

Soft arms were round him, white arms lovingly
Enclasped him in their milky zone;
And, choked with a half sob, but buoyantly,
A heart beat on his own.

Her heart swelled up to his, nor felt, alas!
It held no throb to hers akin;
She looked into his eyes — they did not glass
The man's dark soul of sin.

It was her own love only, brave and true,
Whose sweet looks smiled back into hers;
She beamed devotedness, as women do, —
The weak man-worshippers!

Weak — yet sublime in faith, which, never swerv-
ing,
Inseparate from their passion chaste,
Lives twin with life. Show me the man deserving
Half that abounding waste!

And she, though moral death made black his name,
Believing all things, hoping all,
Of a clear spirit, insulted by the shame,
Clung to him in his fall.

And the red sunset smoulders low and lower,
The west dies out in embers dun,

And up the east — piled horrors arching o'er —
Swoops Night and Storm in one.

It breaks — it maddens with long howls ! And
mark

Where Death rides ! Not on one lone steed,
His pallid horses charge in squadrons ! Hark,
The thunder of their speed !

Drooped she, with suffering worn no less than
fright :

Through all the gloom and shadowing tress
Her face showed plainer — it was very white !
She knew not that her dress

Was in most strange disorder — heeded not
His ruffian freedom with her charms.
Deemed he she yielded to his kisses hot,
While fainting in his arms ?

What further chanced ? I know not. This I know,
That, as incensed, the storm increased.
Gray seamen wist no fiercer wind to blow
The billows into yeast.

And from the coast, from that time evermore,
A strange, dark vessel disappeared.
Did the surf rend and grind her on the shore
To dust ? 'Twas never heard.

Or foundered she in deep sea ? Or the gale
Outweathering, in the after calm,
Laughed she at law, her buccaneering sail
Flapped by the isles of palm ?

I only know with her such foulness went
It might the fleets of the world o'erwhelm,
The Armada with the mightier armament
Which now loads Neptune's realm.

I only know that, at the early morn,
A lady by the lone shore sate,
A later Ariadne more forlorn,
Utterly desolate.

But she was singing — shivering, too, the while,
Upgathering her torn robe and hair,
Yet singing, smiling — oh, her pitiful smile! —
In the chill, stormy air.

And “‘Sing my true love on the wintry sea,’
Some simple village maiden's woe
So runs,” she sighed. “‘Will he come back to me
When daffodilies blow?’

“My true love — ah! a false one in his shape
Has hurt me — let me think — ah me!
I cannot tell — but he shall not escape:
There's vengeance on the sea!

“Oh, sing my true love under the wild wave!
Hark! hark! I hear his funeral bells!
They call me — I will come — in some still cave
We'll gather pearls and shells,

“And coral fans, and flowers, and mosses rare —
Yes! yes! I promised I would come.
I'll make me friends of all the mermaids there;
And there shall be my home.”

Wondering, they found her singing her sad song;
She sang it in her halls of pride.
Smiling, her ravings told of dreadful wrong;
And, smiling so, she died.

DESOLATION.

I.

THERE is a ruinous Castle,
One that I hold in fee,
And the building is not ancient,
Mouldering though it be,
There by a stormy sea.
How its tall tower is tumbled!
The crest of a haughty spirit humbled!
And the massy walls are seamed and crumbled,
Lichened grayly and soaked with grime.
Storm, and thunder, and wintry rime,
Early have done the work of time.
Frost and Rain,
In each lurid stain,
Have graven a mournful meaning plain.

II.

It might repel or appall you,
My Castle by the shore.
Black hemlock groves behind it,
And a gray, rough sea before
Make ever a hollow roar.
Hark to the deep complaining!
Ever a leaden cloud seems raining,
Or lifts but to show a low moon waning,

Or an awful glare from a setting sun.
Nothing by that pile so dun
Is pleasant to hear or look upon.
 Land and Main,
 In stormy strain,
Seem writhed and surged to a rhythmic pain.

III.

No white wing of the sea-bird
 Gleameth in gloom and spray;
Ye might deem no sail of vessel
 Had ever glanced that way,
 Into that lone, lifeless bay.
Yet whence, ill-starred or unwary,
The wreck on the ribbed sands solitary,
Which frowneth back to the ruin dreary?
 Neither responds: there silent all
 Is shriek of gull or owlet's call,
 And the bat clings not to the clammy wall
 Wind and Rain,
 O voices of pain!
Is there life alone in your sad refrain?

IV.

Come, I will play Magician.
 Wouldst thou the place explore?
 Wouldst face a Fear and a Marvel?
 No water-wraith by the shore,
 No ghost in the hemlock hoar;
But the Castle is enchanted!
By a wild and beautiful spirit haunted;
And she singeth a song in the gloom undaunted,
 That pierceth the heart of a mystery.

Oh, misery! and oh, woe is me!
 She sings of what nevermore may be.
 Wind and Rain,
 In mad refrain,
 Moan, "Never again!" shriek, "Never again!"

V.

In a dreamy dimness glides she,
 And you see that she is fair;
 But to look in her eyes too closely,
 I ween you scarce would dare,
 On the great tears frozen there.
 And oh! if, through shame or sorrow,
 One face from the gulf of the past would harrow,
 That face will the beautiful phantom borrow.
 And so she glideth like one in sleep,
 The Æolian lyre of cloud and deep
 Attending her with a choral sweep.
 Wind and Rain,
 And Land and Main,
 Are wild with the burden — "Never again!"



AROUND THE WORLD.

I.

SAIL on, sail on, thou stately ship!
 In roar or ripple, rest not thou!
 The grand horizons grow and dip
 Aft thy wake, before thy prow!

I linger o'er an idle strain,
 A song that's alien and forlorn:

In native pomp thou soar'st amain,
Like albatrosses ocean-born!

Oh, sail, sail on! for, day by day,
Fresh hope invites with each remove:
We belt the world: thy forward way
Alone may bring me to my love!

II.

Oh, soft may be your southern sky,
But Love, the angel, dwells not here;
The tents where I have found him lie
As distant as that home is dear.

I saw them last in summer time:
I see them now: 'tis summer still:
The glory of June's crescent prime
Is August, mellower on the hill;

And riper is the rippled corn;
Still the elms gurgle into song;
Eyes hazy blue, and mild as morn,
Watch the far bay, wistful and long;

Fair fingers flake a white moss-rose —
Their wandering touch shows memory true —
Ah! each still petal there that snows
Might charm long leagues of barren blue!

But sail, sail on, thou stately ship!
Not thine the picture: pause not thou:
Thy retrospects in ocean dip;
Fresh prospects widen from thy prow!

III.

White clouds of summer in our sail
Press soft as kisses on the mouth;
They fill with their voluptuous gale
The purple chambers of the south:

The wandering winds of summer-tide,
That ripen sweet to east and west,
The orange-blossom for the bride,
The heart's-ease for the lover's breast.

But sail, sail on, thou stately ship!
In dimpling azure stay not thou;
Old constellations waning dip,
New heavens are beacons o'er thy prow!

IV.

Star of the North! that flickerest low
In mists of yon horizon's brim,
Backward, with thee, my blessings go—
My heart is low, mine eyes are dim.

Fair cynosure of childhood's home!
Stirs something like to childhood's tears
As thou, involved in phosphor foam,
Sink'st with Arcturus and his peers;

With Cassiopea, Charles's Wain,
And, like a violet in the sky,
Sweet Lyra that hath charmed the pain
Of memory like a melody!

The Antarctic constellations rise
In vain to compensate our loss,

Though, moon-like, Argo sails the skies,
And glorious is the Southern Cross.

Ah! still magnetic to the North,
The heart recalls all lovely lights
That, in the heaven or by the hearth,
Set never on our Northern nights.

I play with types. Yet, true my love,
Thou that the loadstar art to me,
Whatever star or cloud's above,
I turn to thee — I turn to thee!

But sail, sail on, thou stately ship!
By line or tropic, halt not thou;
For sun and moon and stars shall dip
In tempests, gathering o'er thy prow.

V.

Ye Clouds! ye Winds! not always soft
Are ye, and beautiful and mild;
Meteors of Storm! exulting oft
In your dark strength, the day grows wild!

Yet, or in calm, or breeze, or gale,
In adverse or propitious sea,
The hope, sweetheart, grows never pale
Which floats on waifs of song to thee!

Ah! not all lorn are they who roam
Wilds where the wingéd Storm-Fiend screams,
When, Ariel-footed on the foam,
Comes a home-angel to their dreams;

For oft my slumbers hold thy form :
I wake : the touch of perfumed tress
Yet thrilling, and my cheek yet warm
With flush of thine in soft caress.

Sail on, sail on, thou stately ship!
There comes a time — so faint not thou —
When shall the last sea-circle dip,
The haven's arms embrace thy prow!

Sail on! By headlands of Good Hope,
To margins of the Orient move,
And, rounding up the world's great slope,
Still onward, bear me to my love!



ANGELINE.

In the Congressional Burial Ground is a tomb on which are simply
the name "Angeline" and "Other refuge have I none."

I.

"OTHER refuge have I none :"
Carve ye this on my headstone,
This, and my poor name alone,
Angeline — plain Angeline;
And I ask no text divine
To illustrate life of mine;
Neither gloze Death's truth nor garble;
Simply on the milk-white marble
Write — and should some lone bird warble

The same burden, in the gray
 Of the ghostly eve, I pray
 That ye drive it not away,
 But permit its music-moan
 Utterance for the dumb, cold stone —
 “Other refuge have I none!”

II.

“Angeline!” no other name,
 Adjunct, antecedent, fame,
 Style, nor title do I claim.
 Maid or matron, widow, bride,
 Of what lineage, how allied,
 Tell not to my shame or pride.
 Green the branch or grayly mossed,
 It must fall: white death, a ghost,
 Comes in spring and autumn frost.
 Give no date for either fate:
 God's design is consummate,
 Die we early, die we late.
 So of me be nothing shown,
 Save that here, where I lie lone,
 “Other refuge have I none!”



MAY.

Ah! well-a-day!

MY song is sad — it should be gay.
 Goes by the wimpled moon of showers,
 But still the lingering rain-cloud lowers
 On the young promise of the flowers,
 In the sweet May.

Ah! well-a-day!

This watery sky of cheerless gray
Is mine — blank tears! The Hyades,
Dim stars of storm o'er barren seas,
Bring me no flowers nor budding trees
In any May.

Yet, smiling gay,

Shalt thou be queen'd another day;
Sweet influence thine, in dewy heaven,
From the night's silvery sister-seven,
Balmy shall be thy morn and even,
O lovely May!

Time far away,

Did Eastern travellers gravely say
That diamonds in thy charmed dew
Grew, and imbibed more lustrous hue:
So canst thou wasted hopes renew,
Thou magic May!

Then the lark's lay

Be mine — the blue-bird 's on the spray!
O coward heart! to be forlorn,
Thou with the rose and amaranth born;
Laugh down distrust with generous scorn,
Believe in May!

A LOVE POEM.

MY Heart, let me hush thy beating;
My heart, let me lull thy pain;
For my love to my love sends greeting,
O Heart, thou art loved again!
And she sighs, Art thou sad and lonely,
Like ships when they part at sea,
When another heart beats only,
Sad Heart, for thee?

Our lives, O my love! are like rivers,
That flow with a brimming heart,
That darken in fate that severs,
And murmur and fret apart;
But I know that my faith should be firmer,
In love should my trust be set,
For music will come from the murmur,
And sparkle from fret.

O dearest and ever dearer!
Our lives shall together flow,
As nearer and ever nearer
The banks of those rivers grow;
Till the waves shall emerge from the shadow,
And the ripples laugh in the sun,
When, bright in the midst of the meadow,
They blend in one.

Why weep for the moon that waneth?
Why mourn for the leaf that dies?

Why grieve with the wind that complaineth?
And gloom with the autumn skies?
For a wonderful planet is growing
In light, beyond wind and shower;
And a wonderful bud is blowing
To perfect flower.

O love, in the life together
Of heart within heart we prove,
They never shall wane or wither,
Our moon and flower of love.
But the one shall be fixed in splendor,
A lamp in a fairy dome;
And forever a fragrance tender
Shall charm our home.



BULBUL AND GUL.

A GODDESS or saint thou art,
A divine repose,
Serenity seated apart
From our joys and woes,
But beautiful to the heart
As a perfect rose.

And yet I would rob the shrine
Of its placid saint,
The goddess make less divine
By a human taint,
Yea, the heart of the rose incline
To my passionate plaint.

Whatever that world of bliss
Whose rest is balm,
Let it wait! — By the clinging kiss
And the clasping palm!
The winds of delight in this
Deride the calm.

Bubble up, O Bulbul! Night
Without thee is dull.
Assert our claim, through the might
Of unrest, to Gul.
For Song hath divine birthright
To the Beautiful.

ST. FRANCIS OF ASSISI.

O LOVE! you lay the volume by
That held you like a holy chime —
“Life of St. Francis” — with a sigh
Which says: “That was a pleasant time
In old Perugia’s mountain-town
On the Umbrian valley looking down —
Flushed like an Eden in sublime
Environment of mountains vast;
And do not you, as I, recall
What, morn and even, and first and last,
Attracted most of all?

“The peaks of Apennine we knew
By heart — the many-citied land

Wherethrough the infant Tiber drew
A thousand streams in silver band,
Filled with the murmur of the pines
That told the olives and the vines
They heard the sea on either hand.
But, kindled on its lofty cape,
A light-tower to that inland coast,
O'er waves of greenwood, corn, and grape,
What object charmed us most?

"Assisi seated in the sun!
All round from Monte Sole's height
The insistent fascination
Of its white walls enthralled our sight.
And moon and starlight on its slope
Showed but a dimmer heliotrope.
We watched it many a mellow night:
Once when a warrior comet came,
And flashed, in high heaven opposite,
A sheathless sword of pallid flame,
Drawn from the infinite.

"To sweet St. Francis' native town,
Alas! we made no pilgrimage;
Nor to St. Mary's, lower down,
His Portiuncula hermitage.
We knew but by its star-like shine
The splendors of Assisi's shrine,
In mystic triple stage on stage.
It only asked one summer's day —
How strange it seems in you and me! —
That narrow vale of Umbria
Made severance like the sea."

O gentle wife! I cannot tell
To wistful eyes of retrospect
What *dolce far niente's* spell,
In that midsummer, caused neglect;
What imp, procrastination hight,
Seduced us when we meant no slight.
In life, all paradox and defect,
Easy is difficult — the friend
Next door to visit — duties small,
To be done any day, that end
In not being done at all.

“How can this trite philosophy
Console me in my great regret?”
Nay, love, look not so tearfully,
And we will find some comfort yet.
What figure, think you, in those streets
The gentle, loving youth repeats,
Singing his gay French canzonet?
Doth either temple's sumptuous pride
Suit stone and crust for bed and board,
And bridegroom joyful in his bride —
The poverty of our Lord?

O brown serge holier than the cope!
Was mystery veiled in long-sleeved gown?
And awful was his girdle-rope?
Were skirts that swept his ankles brown?
Bore he, in hands and feet and side,
The five wounds of the Crucified?
Did high God send his seraph down,
On the lone mount, to imprint such sign?
Nor pious faith nor pious fraud

Could make him more or less divine,
That sweet-souled man of God!

O happy swallows! circling skim
And twitter o'er the gray church-towers.
He called you sisters; ye with him
Chirped sweetly when he sang the Hours.
And ye, his brothers innocent,
With whom he talked where'er he went,
Play, lamb and leveret, in the flowers!
Wise foolishness and melting ruth —
That move deep chords, O love! in you —
Born of child-instincts, or a truth
He and the angels knew!

“O Sun, my brother above all!
Stars, Sister Moon, in praise accord.
Chaste, humble, useful, precious, full,
O Sister Water, freely poured!
Robust and jocund, strong and bright,
O Brother Fire! illumine the night.
Live tongues of beauty, praise the Lord!
O Brother Wind! thy wonders weave
In clouds and the blue sky above,
Wherefrom all creatures life receive,
And weave them all of love.

“Confess the Lord, O Mother Earth!
Through whom so beautiful thou art.
To herb, fruit, flower, he giveth birth
And color from Love's eyes and heart.
Serve God!” he sang. His sermons good,
Dear to shy creatures of the wood,

Could even to bole and branch impart
Their glowing sense: a conscious soul
Kin to his own in all things moved.
His monument is grand — the whole
Creation that he loved.

O Life, that sought to imitate
The one pure type, its perfect Chief,
By its own purity separate
As is the dew-drop on a leaf,
Which yet doth from its luminous veil
A glory to the flower exhale!
Close sympathy with no touch of grief!
Let fair Assisi on its slope,
An unremote yet reachless star,
Lend to our hearts another trope,
So near and yet so far.

O Poet, who in faltering rhyme
First wove the Tuscan into song!
O poem and miracle sublime
Thyself, in Dante sweet and strong!
To his fourth circle of Paradise,
To the King-splendor of the skies,
Dost thou, the elder seer, belong.
Thee "Sister Death" hath glorified;
And what an image we have won:
Through kindled mists of mountain-side,
Assisi in the sun!

ST. FRANCES OF ROME.

SWEET Saint Frances, fair and holy
As the maids of martyr-fame,
Tending in disguise the lowly,
She a high-born Roman dame, —
Menial garb and gathered fagots
Did in her transfigured look :
Common flints show fine as agates
In the crystal of a brook.

She was wedded to a noble
Whom she loved exceeding well,
But therefrom arose a trouble
Never easy to dispel.
From the babe upon her bosom
To the stripling at her knee,
Her young life to pink-white blossom
Budded like an almond-tree.

In the home they filled with beauty
Multiplied the household cares ;
Hers was a divided duty
With her penances and prayers.
Lo! the ecstatic Vision touches!
Hark! her Angel bids her pray!
Baby lips and tiny clutches
Pull her heart another way.

From the Office of the Virgin,
Four times at the self-same word,

She is called by needs that urge in
Childish tones that will be heard.
"Help me, O thou blessed Woman,
By thy Seven Swords of Pain!
For the heavenly and the human
Almost tear my heart in twain."

For the fourth time now returning
To her child in meek distress,
Reads she golden letters burning
On the border of its dress.
'Tis that whole verse from the Psalter;
And a sweet Voice thrills her ear:
"Though you leave me at the altar,
You will always find me here."

THE BRIDES OF CHRIST.

I.

ST. DOROTHEA.

THE little martyr-maid of Cæsarea —
I do not a more lovely legend know.
Said young Theophilus, mocking: "Dost thou go
To join thy Spouse? If more than fond idea,
Send me, I pray thee, pretty Dorothea,
Of flowers and fruits that in his garden grow!"
The maiden meekly bowed her head; and so
She passed to death along the Roman Via.

A blooming boy, with hair like odorous flame,
Out-dazed the sword that slew her; the next morn

A blooming boy to young Theophilus came,
With three fresh roses and three apples: scorn
Melted in bliss. By crown and palm! we claim
To guess that fragrance, and are less forlorn!

II.

ST. CECILIA.

Two visions of divine Cecilia,
Born of Italian art, possess my mind.
One in the marble, at her tomb enshrined,
Reveals her as in catacomb she lay.
The budding maiden in her chaste array —
Ah! closely let that awful necklace bind
Clipt flower to stem! — to that cold sleep declined,
Was in warm marriage-bed a bud away.

Her heart's dear love starved for a Mystic Spouse,
She was not chary of sweet music's gift.
I see the listening rapture of her brows:
I hear her organ yearn, exult, and lift
Humanity to God! The heavens arouse;
And storms and seraphs o'er the white keys drift.

III.

ST. AGNES.

I WAS God's maid, less woman than a child;
And yet they threw me in the common stews
Naked as I was born, for men to use.
The dear Lord saved his vessel, though reviled,

From outrage of a look: the Mother smiled —
Over my hot shame all my hair shook loose;
And, lo! it swept my feet in lengths profuse,
A bower of blinding awe to ruffians wild!

My life's green branch they lopped with cruel sword;
But He hath kissed my hurts, and they are well;
And, walking in the meads of asphodel,
I kiss the scarred feet of my gracious Lord;
I lead his lambkins by my lily bell,
Where the pomegranates shade the softest sward.

IV.

ST. CATHERINE.

“WHOM I shall wed,” said Alexandria's princess,
“rare

Of beauty must be, past imagining;
So great I shall not think I have made him king;
More rich, sweet-hearted more, than summer air!”
In dreams she came where courts such state declare
Of Mother and Son enthroned that worshiping
She knelt, though royal: the Child placed a ring
Upon her finger, and she woke — 'twas there!

So Catherine became Christ's. Again she kneels:
With rose and lily, in white and purple clothed,
No shining host now hails the heaven-betrothed,
But God's bolt shatters the sharp torture-wheels.
Then Night and angels her pall-bearers are —
The Bridegroom waits on Sinai lone and far.

V.

ST. MARGARET.

OF all the virgins pure that bear the palm,
There is not any one more meek and mild
Than sweet maid Margaret. Tending while a child
The flocks, she drew near. in the mountain's calm,
To the Good Shepherd, like a trustful lamb;
She felt that God with man was reconciled;
She saw diurnal victory undefiled
Of light o'er darkness hoist the oriflamme

Of Morning. So flashed she, in dungeon drear,
The Cross uplifted, till the Dragon foul
Crouched at her feet, in fear of that white soul.
O Pearl of Antioch, so soft and clear!
O Daisy, with the chaste dew on thy lips!
Thou touchest Christ with stainless finger-tips.

VI.

ST. BARBARA.

Dioscorus of Heliopolis
Shut his wise daughter in a lofty tower,
Jealous of lovers; therein, for her bower
She caused three windows to be made, in this
Her father disobeying, but said: "It is
Through three clear windows that the Almighty
Power,
The Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, shower
Light on the soul — with light immortal bliss!"

Scourged, by the gold hair dragged, slain by thy sire —
A turbaned heathen! — soft as rosy May,
Yet resolute, and avenged by instant fire,
Christian Bellona! sweet-browed Barbara!
With the Red Mantle of thy fortitude,
Thy Tower and Cannon, be my soul endued!

VII.

ST. AGATHA.

“SHE hath no breasts — is cruelly maimed withal:
What shall we do for her, when spoken for,
Our little sister? Sheathe her, if a door,
In boards of cedar; if she be a wall,
Build up a house of silver,* and instal
Her worship” — so the monks. O bleeding core
Of maidenhood, thy Spouse and King shall pour
Balm in thy wounds, the lilies’ growth recall!
When Etna belched forth Phlegethon, and rolled
Its molten flanks upon Catania,
The saint’s veil they did reverently unfold
And wave it in the face of fire — behold!
Piled black against the convent’s wall to-day,
That Red Sea curdled by Saint Agatha!

VIII.

ST. LUCIA.

“WHAT’S this? Two human eyes upon a dish?
Wretch! what dost mean?” “Lucia sends thee these;
She greets thee: ‘Be no longer ill at ease;
They are thine! When mine, a spirit devilish,

* Song of Solomon viii. 8, 9.

With them, with pink bloom and pale limbs, did fish
For men's souls.' " Quick! to her—ere horror freeze!
Her wan lips smiled beneath the bandages:
"Thou hast languished for mine eyes—have, then,
thy wish!"

She raised the fillet—the youth dropped as dead.
"Look up!" a sweet voice spake, "and praise the
Lord!"

He obeyed trembling—O illumined head!
Low with an altered spirit he adored.
Thenceforth an angel's eyes, her own instead,
Lighted her to her martyrdom's reward.

IX.

ST. URSULA.

A BOWER of woven palms! In white arrayed,
Marshalled beneath that verdant canopy
By fair-haired Ursula of Brittany,
Eleven thousand martyrs, each a maid!
For England's heir, Etherius, had obeyed
His bride's will, honoring her virginity.
To Rome on pilgrimage, by river and sea,
They sailed, and prettily the bold mariner played.

Saint, dear to tender years! thou and thy doves
Fell pierced with many arrows, and the Rhine
With blood of innocents ran red as wine—
Still teach that to the pure Death's kiss is Love's!
Still teach it, though thy mortuary shrine
May moulder, while the stream to ocean moves!

THE ECSTASY OF ST. THERESA.*

MY soul is faint with longing — come to me!
 I long as pagan maidens longed for him,
 The young Apollo; all my senses swim
 In flowers and flames; voluptuous agony
 Runs on one tense chord into ecstasy:
 Fever at heart, and languor in the limb.
 That thou art pictured on mine eyeballs dim,
 I feel, O lovely youth! I cannot see!

 I long for thee — an undeflowered bride,
 On whom mysterious Night shuts sacred doors.
 I hear the bridegroom's step upon the floors —
 He comes! the thrilling dart is in my side!
 Lie still betwixt my breasts! drink up my breath!
 O Spouse! O King! O Heaven! O Love! O Death!

ART SONNETS.

I.

TWO MADONNAS.

IS it in grace maternal she excels
 Only, or sumptuous womanhood mature,
 This Lady of Sultana-like coiffure?
 Nay, her dark eyes are thought's divinest wells.
 Nay, on her lips the lilies' perfume dwells,
 The seal of the angel: doth it not endure
 Immortally here, impressed on none less pure
 Than, in her arms, the child Emmanuel's?

* Vide the Ecstasy of St. Theresa by Bernini, in the Church of Santa Maria della Vittoria, Rome.

See, not less tender, less to be adored,
This other Mary: child-eyes wonder-wide
At her maternity, the mystic bride
And Mother and meek handmaid of the Lord!
Murillo's peasant girl is strangely fair
By that superb Madonna of the Chair.

II.

FRA ANGELICO.

Not for earth's joys, triumphal, hymeneal,
Those harp-strings twang, those golden trumpets
blare.
On gilded grounds, in place of the blue air,
In Byzant lines unrounded and unreal,
The simple monk worked out his own ideal —
And were there ever forms more heavenly fair?
Nay, from the life the ineffable angels there
Seem limned and colored by their servant leal!
What was his charm? Whence the inflowing grace?
The beauty of holiness! His child-soul dreamed,
When psalm and censer filled the holy place,
Till to take shape the mist, the music seemed;
Till Mary Mother's smile grew out of song,
To symphony of the seraphic throng!

III.

THE FATES OF MICHAEL ANGELO.

ARE these the inexorable Sisters Three?
These withered things like witches of Macbeth,
The Devil's Sibyls on the blasted heath?
Crowned and on thrones sublime the Fates should be,

The distaff reaching from the loft to lea,
While threads of stellar rays weave life and death.
Black robes of Atropos e'en, wreath on wreath,
Should burn with stars quenchless eternally.

For the Greeks had their apotheosis,
Their Hades — Tartarus or Elysium :
The voice within the soul was never dumb
That told them of another life than this.
These should have beauty too — of such a sort
That it should deepen their most awful port.

IV.

ON AN ETRUSCAN TOMB.

ON thy rough sides, O cinerary urn!
Two thousand years and more these warriors fight;
One lifts the shield, and one the sword to smite;
The end it is not given us to discern,
Nor yet the purport of that strife to learn.
Scorn not my reading, terrible if trite.
All life is such a battle, until the night
Falls, and ephemeral heats to ashes burn.

Lo! on the lid, wrapt closely to the chin
In the long sheet, arms limp upon the breast,
Head drooped and turned, a form of perfect rest!
Strewn to the winds the dust that lay herein :
Yet on this sepulchre the Etruscan faith
Carved unmistakably a Sleep — not Death.

.

.

V.

THE VENUS DE' MEDICI.

"Nec fuerat nudas pœna videre Deus."

A GODDESS should be naked unashamed:
 This, and that Venus the Capitoline,
 And others, is their attitude divine
 Or human? Are these fair Nymphs rightly named?
 On undraped deity man might look unblamed:
 And did she, conscious Victress, half decline
 Her prowess, like this shy girl Florentine,
 When the great Three the apple of discord claimed?

It may be — for she is lovelier than all thought:
 In every delicate yet redundant curve
 Voluptuous, in her virginal reserve,
 The most delicious woman ever wrought
 In marble, to a rhythmic melody
 That hath an echo of divinity!



TITAN.

LIFE hath its brave despair, in woes or wars
 Strong to endure, and with the worst that copes
 Knowing it for the worst, — its braver hopes,
 The sole things great in presence of the stars!
 O scornful stars! not for our joys and jars
 And small ambitions, on those ambient slopes,
 Your revolutions shape our horoscopes,
 As once was deemed; but the red pulse of Mars

Or Aldebaran beats like fire in blood
 Heroic — that fine anger of the soul
 Which nerves it to Promethean fortitude!
 And, infinitesimal in the radiant Whole,
 We claim of God infinity of good,
 And crown the death's-head with an aureole!



TO THE COMET, 1874.

THOU Note of Exclamation in the sky!
 Sensation Vagabond, whose visible shout
 The Quaker meeting of the stars doth flout!
 O devilish Broom on which the witches fly!
 O Sword on finest hair suspended high!
 Rather, O Corsair, steaming in and out,
 The planet-fleet; thy swift bows, curled about,
 And all thy white wake flashing insolently!

O Mænad, with the mad locks backward borne
 On the straight hurricane of thy strenuous rush!
 O gaseous Poet, that if cooled in crush
 Of common sense wert small! Thin Soul forlorn,
 That never had a friend! Vast Traveller — nay!
 I am dumb before thy long parabola!



GENOA.

GENTLY, as roses die, the day declines;
 On the charmed air there is a hush the while;
 And delicate are the twilight tints that smile
 Upon the summits of the Apennines.

The moon is up; and o'er the warm wave shines
A fairy bridge of light, whose beams beguile
The fancy to some secret summer isle,
Where Love may dwell, which only Love divines.

The blue night of Italian summer falls
Around us; over the crystalline swell
I see the lamps lit in her tier of halls,
And bid to Genoa the Superb farewell.
Home of Columbus! having dwelt in thee,
I dream of undiscovered lands at sea!



PISA.

ON the Lung 'Arno, in each stately street,
The silence is a hunger, and craves food,
Like Ugolino cowering o'er his brood.
Sad Pisa! in thy garments obsolete
Still grand, the sceptre fallen at thy feet,
An impuissant queen of solitude,
Thine inconsolable gaze speaks widowhood,
Fixed on the river voiceless and deplete.

A trance more lonely — lo! not many rods
From the shrunk Arno, a more slumberous air,
A dream of Heaven in marbles rich and rare!
Oppressed with sleep, the Campanile nods;
But in the Campo Santo's hush of breath
Orcagna's pathos paints, not Sleep, but Death.



